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A dark form went off in the darkness toward the misty river, and Tillie was lying, sobbing out her anguish.

IN THE WEB; OR, THE GIRL-WIFE'S TRIALS.

A HEART AND LIFE ROMANCE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY EDWIN SOUTH.

CHAPTER I. MAN AND WIFE.

It was a dark October night, a little raw and exceedingly disagreeable. The rain had been falling in a vexatious drizzle all day, and the wind that came up from the east, a little before sunset, drove it in wreaths of mist and spray from the great rolling river over the low-lying Crescent City.

The sails of the clusters of ships huddled below and above Canal street were drenched, and shook dismally, and dripped steadily, in a dreary way, until the shadows of night brought a calm, and hid them from view. Then the lights—red and green—twinkled from the smoke-stacks of the steamboats and glared through the fog and rain from the high decks of ocean craft.

It was an ugly night on the river; but, notwithstanding, there were plenty of open boats afloat, from Carrollton to the grim-looking, but now deserted, Mint.

In one of these boats sat a young man, dressed in deep black—his handsome face more than half concealed by a broad-brimmed slouched hat, which may have been worn partly for the purpose of concealment and partly to guard his face from the storm.

He pushed out from the foot of Natchez street boldly into the stream, and, with far-reaching strokes, pulled down the river, heading his tiny vessel for the right bank. Down past the rows of steamers and stacks of freight piled high upon the levee; down past the fringe of gas-lights twinkling through the fog; down past Algiers, half hid under the bank; nothing to be heard all this time,

save the rain on the river and the rattle of the oars.

Finally the man stopped rowing and glanced toward the right bank. He was within fifty feet of the levee, and could see the shore distinctly.

"That's it. I thought it could not be far from here," he said, backing water with his right oar and pulling with the other.

A black Bremen steamship was anchored between the skiff and the land, and seemed to raise its big bulk up out of the water to bar the frailer craft's way.

The young man looked at the huge monster, and then exclaiming—"Drat the Dutch hulk! I'll have to go below her," suffered the skiff to drop down with the current.

When he could see the light on her stern he plied the oars lustily, and in a few moments had landed.

Leaping ashore, he dragged the skiff up on the sand, and, taking the oars upon his shoulders, stalked away toward a cabin that stood about a hundred yards from the river.

It was a humble-looking abode, standing in the center of a huge cane-field, and on the night of which we write looked very lonely indeed, isolated as it was, and shabby, too.

A light was gleaming from the window that looked out upon the river, and when the young man saw this, he muttered:

"Watching for me as usual, eh? Ah! I wish I hadn't this matter on hand. It's an unpleasant job, but fortune has been fickle with me, and has ruined my constancy, and conscience, too."

When he reached the cabin, he looked in

through the window, and beheld a young girl seated by a bright fire of drift. She was a beautiful girl; there could be no mistake about that. Eyes large, dewy, and blue as summer skies; skin white as moonbeams; and a lithe, graceful, girlish figure, that looked dainty and pretty even in the faded alpaca which she wore.

"Pretty as ever," said the stranger; and then he dropped his oars, and, turning the knob of the door, entered.

"Oh, Mark, dear, is that you?" She was upon her feet in an instant, her face beaming with a new light, and her scarlet mouth all smiles and dimples.

He put his arm around her in a familiar, lover-like way, and kissed her. "What have you been doing?"

"Waiting for you, darling."

"That all?"

"Yes, that's all I've done since dark."

"You might have been better employed, then. Looking and waiting for a miserable creature like me is not very profitable work."

A shade of doubt and fear passed over the girl's face as she looked up into that of her companion.

"Oh, Mark, what do you mean? What's happened? You frighten me."

"I almost frightened myself when I stop to think. I'm ruined—disgraced—that's all! Ain't it enough?"

"Disgraced! How? Tell me." She put up her arms about his neck, coaxingly.

"Well, the long and short of it is just this: I have been betting against the bank in a Gravier street gambling-hell, off and on, for a week back. My winnings were large at first, but since Thursday luck has been against me, and I've lost a round ten thousand. You see, Tillie, I've been going it, and now, on this blessed Saturday night, I'm five thousand worse than nothing."

"But you can borrow—"

"No, no," waving his hand. "I've done that and worse—a good deal worse."

"Worse, Mark Blanchard! Surely you have not committed a theft?"

"Not exactly. I'm too much of a gentleman for that, you know, but I've forged my Uncle Gabriel's name for five thousand dollars. Don't start, Tillie. I had to have the money, and I could not get it in any other way."

The girl was deathly pale now, and trembled as if with ague as she said:

"And, Mark, what—what do you propose to do?"

"Well, to tell you frankly, I've made up my mind to try a foreign climate for a while. I'm going to Mexico to-night."

"To-night? Oh, Mark! you are not going without me, are you, darling? You won't leave me behind? I'd die without you, dearest, I know I would." She wound her arms tighter about him, and looked up appealingly.

He caught both her hands in his, and looked an instant into her face, saying, at length:

"You must have sense now, Tillie. This is no time for sentiment, with only that river there between Captain Cain and his

hungry police and I, and a gloomy State prison in the background. I don't fancy Baton Rouge much as a place of residence. That I may escape that, I've determined to go to Mexico this very night."

"Then I will go with you to-night, Mark. We shall never be separated. I am your wife, and nothing should part man and wife."

"Neither shall any thing part us, darling. But, remember this: I have to go at once; must make my way through the swamps in order to dodge the police, and I'm afraid taking you would not add to my chances of escape much."

"And you are going to leave me, then? Oh, Mark, darling, I can not stand that. It will kill me."

He smoothed her bright hair back until it fell in a torrent of gold over her shoulders.

"The alternative is not pleasant," he said, at length, "and I would do any thing—make any sacrifice—to avoid it, save my liberty. I could not live ten years in a State prison, darling; that would kill me, you see; and I know my little rose-bud could not live after that. Now, which do you think best—go to Mexico and have you join me there in a few weeks, or go up the river. Look up now; decide."

There was a moment's silence; broken only by the sobs of the girl, and he continued:

"Go on, darling; decide; time is precious."

She looked up now through her tears.

"I don't know what to say; what do you propose?"

"Just this. I will slip off to-night, and when I reach the other side of the Rio Grande, I will send for you. After a while Uncle Gabriel will forgive me, and we will return, and I will acknowledge you as my wife. You see, the case is not so desperate, if only a little tact is displayed in the management of details."

"And how long will all this take?" asked Tillie, still weeping bitterly.

"A year or two. Come, we will not think the time long once we are united in Mexico. I can give the old couple this purse," handing a wallet; "it will pay them for your board, and insure you good treatment until I send for you."

They talked a long while, and, at length, he succeeded in winning the girl over to his view of the matter.

When he had done so he said, all at once, "Where is Pettis and Sam?"

"In the next room," answered Tillie. "I guess they have gone to bed. Do you want to see Pettis?"

"No; there is no necessity for that. You can give the old couple this purse," handing a wallet; "it will pay them for your board, and insure you good treatment until I send for you."

She took the purse mechanically, and said: "Oh, Mark Blanchard, you don't know, can never guess, how much I love you. I have left my poor old father lonely and wretched away up there in Tennessee because I loved you better than all the world, and because I trusted you. You will be true to me; you will repay that devotion by truthfulness and loyalty; you will not, no

matter what may come, desert me. Will you, Mark?"

A shadow passed over Mark Blanchard's face. This appeal had touched him; yes, heartless, sordid as he was, that petition had reached his heart. He was evidently wavering. He could not carry out his bold, bad design, which was intended to crush out all the happiness of that poor girl's life. A vision of a happy home on the Cumberland, in the heart of the iron mines, came up out of the glowing fire; of a wretched old pair; of an empty chair.

He was fast melting. He gathered the girl closer to him, and kissed her passionately.

"Good-by, Tillie! Good-by!"

The cabin door opened and closed again; a dark form went off in the darkness toward the misty river, and Tillie was lying, sobbing out her anguish.

CHAPTER II.

FLIGHTING AND THE PLOTTERS.

WHEN Mark Blanchard left the cabin, he betook himself at once to his boat again. After he had turned from the shore, and was, perhaps, a yard or two out in the stream, he paused a moment, as in thought; then he rowed on again a short distance and stopped, still undecided.

"Perhaps I had better see Silas, to-night," he thought, "or while I am in this tender mood, my courage may forsake me, if I do not resort to some potent stimulant. Yes, I'll go."

He spoke the last words boldly and in a loud voice; so loud, in fact, that he was startled himself. What if some person had overheard? But there was little to fear from that; the rain was beating its even tattoo upon the river, and nothing could be seen but the distant lights of the great city.

The prow of the boat was turned quartering down the stream, and the young man bent steadily to the oar. He was perfectly soaked with the falling rain when he stepped ashore, at last, and looked around.

"Ah, to be sure! there's the old Port Market, and there, right across in that old ruin, my friend and helpmate resides. A nice place for a man's friends to live, and a nice place for a nice young man like Mark Blanchard to be prowling around after midnight."

All the time he was speaking he was walking away from the river, leaving the rickety old Port Market, black as a huge beetle, with its clumsy outstretched wings and rows of legs, to his left.

Opposite the market a row of tall, grim-looking houses stood. From the first floor of one of these a ray of light struggled out upon the pavements. Blanchard stopped in front of this house and looked in at the open doorway. A screen, on which was painted a ship in full sail, prevented him from catching a sight of the bar-room, but he could hear the sound of a great many voices, and occasionally the clink of glasses and snatches of songs in French and Spanish, and he knew the tap-room was full of

maudlin sailors, representing almost every nationality in the universe.

Placing his fingers in his mouth, he gave three long, sharp whistles.

The sound had scarce died away when the screen was pushed aside, and a large, muscular man stepped briskly forward. He was dressed in a suit of black, fashionably cut and well-fitting, his shirt collar turning low down upon his neck, and a large neckerchief tied jauntily, but loosely, an inch or two below the upper button. His shirt-bosom was a mass of ruffles, and a small emerald pin gleamed amid the snowy meshes.

"Hello, my boy!" he exclaimed, as soon as his eyes rested upon Blanchard. "What's the row?"

"I want to see you, Silas, about that little affair across the river."

"The d—l you do. Well, speak out. I'm always ready to talk business, or help a friend in a scrape or out of one."

"I don't like to tell you every thing here," said Mark, glancing uneasily around.

"Of course we can. Follow me." The man who was called Silas now stepped to a dingy-looking hall-door, and taking out a night-key opened it.

"Rather dark in there," remarked Blanchard, hesitating to follow his companion.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid. Here, give me your hand. Now grip the baluster and hold it to all the way up."

Blanchard obeyed, and was soon mounting the creaking stairs.

They stopped at the third landing and groped their way along a gloomy hall. Presently they paused before a door, through the key-hole of which a ray of light penetrated into the darkness.

Silas rapped on the door and called out: "Mangy! Mangy!"

Presently the door was softly opened, and the two men walked into a brilliantly-lighted room. Daintily flowered carpets, soft-cushioned sofas and tall, gilded mirrors, looked brighter and better after that tramp through the dark, wet night and through the bare halls of that crazy old building.

"By Jove! Silas, you have things fixed nicely up here," said Mark, as soon as he had crossed the threshold.

"Why, you don't think I'd live any way else do you—leastwise, as long as Mangy stays here?"

Blanchard now, for the first time, was aware of the presence in the room of a tall, graceful girl. She was seated on a sofa beside the door when his eyes fell upon her, her hands folded idly upon her lap, and her dark luminous eyes were looking up into his, with a questioning gaze.

Her complexion was of the brownish-olive, and from her low forehead drifts of purplish-black hair were rolled back into a coil, that looked very much like an ebony crown.

Her shapely form was robed in the finest cashmere, and a cluster of gems held the ends of a collar of real lace, where her delicately-rounded throat ended.

She colored slightly, as she met Mark's gaze, and dropped her eyes shyly.

"You needn't blush, Mangy," said Silas, bluntly. "Mister Blanchard is a married man, or, leastwise, is going to be—which, darling, is all the same, you know."

"This lady is not Mrs. Norman then?" asked Blanchard.

"Well, I rather think not, seeing she ain't Missus at all. That's my daughter, Mark; and, Mangy, this is my old friend Blanchard."

The young girl bowed in recognition of the introduction, and Mark could not help noting how graceful she was.

"As the captain here has some private business with me," continued Silas, "you may go to bed, Mangy."

The girl arose, and bidding the two men good-night, left them.

"Splendid girl," exclaimed Silas. "Always waits up for me. Would never go to bed if I would not come up here and tell her to do so. Beautiful as an angel, and docile as a lamb. Don't often meet such girls, captain, in New Orleans."

"No, and rarely anywhere else," answered Mark. "But I never knew you had a daughter, Norman. Where has the girl been kept?"

"Well, up at Saint Genevieve. I've had her schooled up there, but I brought her home for a week or two, and I intend to send her over to Biloxi for the summer. You see, cap, this is not the kind of a place for a good girl, and I would not have her find out how cursed mean her father is for the world—no, since I'm not for the world."

"There was a moment's silence. At length Mark said, rubbing his hands together as he spoke:

"Well, Silas, I have taken your advice so far; I have seen Tillie to-night, and your trumped-up story served the purpose well. To tell the whole truth, though, I nearly broke down a couple of times, I'm so tender-hearted, and hate scenes so."

Silas Norman smiled derisively as he listened, and when Mark had finished, answered:

"Yes, you're very tender-hearted—all young 'uns are, but, when you've seen as much of the world's cunning devious as I have, you'll be as tired of chicken-hearted people as I am."

"You can't blame a fellow for feeling badly at parting with his lawful wedded wife for the last time—can you?"

"Well, no," answered Silas. "It's a tough matter, I'll confess; but, you see there is a cool hundred thousand dollars and Miss Blanche Davenant on the opposite side of the scale. Nothing like gold, to outweigh love and nonsense. But, tell me, what did you say to-night?"

"I told her," Mark replied, "that I had forged uncle Gabriel's name for a large amount; that I was forced to leave the city; that I had chosen Mexico for my future residence, and that, in a fortnight, I would send a man after her, and that we should be reunited again west of the Rio Grande."

"Did you tell her who the man would be?"

"No. You know you was not sure Turner would do the business, and I thought it would be better not to say anything about it. It leaves us free to make other arrangements."

"Very cute," and Norman winked slightly at his companion. "It's a pity your talents have not been exercised more fully. Deception seems to come quite natural to you."

"Rather a dubious compliment, Norman, but, I suppose you're right. However, when I get rid of Tillie, and find myself master of old Davenant's ducats and old Davenant's daughter, I'll join church and lead a model life."

"Repent, eh?"

"Yes; do works meet for repentance, at least. But, have you spoke to Turner yet?"

"Not yet; he's a little flush now; made a winning at the 'Polka' last night, and Turner's one of those kind of fellows it don't do to arrange with when he's flush."

"High priced when flush, I suppose?"

"No, not that. Now, you wouldn't believe it, but it's a fact, he sets pious or honorable as he calls it, whenever his pocket-book is heavy."

"But, when he's short of funds?"

"Well, then, he's ready for anything. Ah, Blanchard! poverty is the worst of vices. You'll find that out if you live long enough."

"It strikes me," said Mark, after a pause, "that Turner is not the right kind of a man for this job."

"Why not?"

"Well, in the first place, this is one of those peculiar jobs that no man with a conscience, or too fine a sense of honor, can undertake. And if Turner should betray us, I would have to leave New Orleans for certain, and no mistake."

"Right—quite right. But I know my man. I'll bet on his word if he gives it once; and, besides, I have got claims upon him that make him my slave, and he is so genteel, and looks so honest! Any woman would believe Turner on his shape. Nothing like a polished exterior, my boy; you know that."

Blanchard assented, and then said: "Norman, I'll make it a thousand dollars if you manage this thing discreetly."

The two men clutched hands, and Norman simply said:

"Good!"

"When can I see you again, Silas?"

"Well, say the night after to-morrow night. I'll meet you at the Polka."

"All right. Good-night."

"Good-night," answered Norman.

Blanchard stepped out into the dark hall, and Silas stood in the doorway of the room in which they had sat until the visitor groped his way to the head of the stairs; then, turning on his heel, he muttered:

"What a precious scoundrel you are, Mr. Mark Blanchard, Esquire—what a precious scoundrel!"

The last words were spoken slowly and aloud, and then Silas Norman threw himself upon a sofa at full length, and began to think—to think of the past, that had such a terror for him.

CHAPTER III.

A PAGE FROM THE PAST.

On the following morning Mark Blanchard arose quite early, and dressed very carefully. He was an orphan, and resided with his uncle Gabriel Blanchard, at the latter's splendid residence, on Charles street, almost a mile west of Tivoli Circle, where the orange and magnolia blend their fruits and blossoms from June to January, in beautiful profusion, and where the air is heavy with delicious scents.

Mark was fortunate in being the favorite of a bachelor uncle, who was as rich as he was irritable, and who had been used so long to having undisputed sway over the fortunes of his nephew that he at length regarded him pretty much in the same light as he would any other piece of human property attached to his estate.

This, of course, was very galling to a young man of Mark's wayward disposition, but a rupture with his uncle meant poverty, and Mark was too luxurious in his tastes to ever think of giving up his brilliant expectations.

It was his uncle Gabriel who had taken him from his mother's dying arms; it was his uncle Gabriel who had paid for his tuition at Dartmouth, and it was his uncle Gabriel's plan and hope that he should wed the youngest child of his old friend, Richard Davenant.

Blanche was young, beautiful and an heiress. Gabriel Blanchard would have doted upon a woman like her in his youth, and it was but natural he concluded that the taste of his nephew would run in the same channel.

Colonel Davenant resided, during the summer, on his plantation on the Bayou La Fourche, but the winter months were spent at his city residence, in the most exclusive part of that very exclusive neighborhood, of which Prytanee street is the center.

On the night of the day of which we write, Blanche Davenant was to give his first party of the season. It was to be a select affair; only the cream of the Creole city were honored with invitations, and very few regrets were to be expected.

Everybody knew that Mark Blanchard had secured the heiress, and those who were most intimate even knew that the wedding would take place on the following Christmas Eve; therefore, the beaux turned their eyes and compliments to other shrines, and belles felt, when they looked upon the stylish Mark, that he was beyond the reach of speculation, just the same as if the marriage rites had been solemnized.

Now, it might be thought that Mark Blanchard felt proud on this morning, and perhaps happy, too; but, nothing could well be further from the truth. He was very miserable. The coming *fete* was to prove his power to dissemble. In the glitter and glare of fashion he hoped to drown all the memories of his deserted wife. That he would be equal to the occasion he very much doubted. He admired Blanche, but he loved, as devotedly as he was capable of loving anybody, the poor confiding child whom he had won but six months before.

Had not his uncle set his heart on this new alliance, he would have been true to Tillie Maynard. But he had never openly disobeyed his uncle, and his secret marriage, were it to become known, he felt sure would disinherit him.

Work for his living, with his dainty white hands, he could not. He could gamble, he could lie, he could deceive; but labor was a step nearer social degradation, never had he cared to take, and so his marriage vows were forgotten, and the wife of a few months was worse than widowed.

With the glad October sunshine streaming in a yellow flood about him, through the open window, and the carols of the mocking-birds in his ears, and all around him luxury and splendor, he felt a pang of regret for Tillie.

"Poor Tillie," he muttered; "I will see to it that you shall not suffer for the comforts of life. You shall share the price of the sacrifice, and I know I'll not be wholly free from the pain. I do wonder if she'll suffer much? Norman's plan of having me killed off is a capital idea; it will turn her thoughts in a new direction when she has nothing but the grave and eternity to look to."

There was a shuffling, shambling tread on the soft-carpeted stairs; then the door was softly opened, and a bright mulatto girl put her head in at the chink.

"Mas'r Mark, de grub'nor is waitin' breakfast. I's sent up for you, sah."

"Tell the governor I'll be down in a jiffy, Mattie."

"In a what, sah?"

"Confound you, in a jiffy—in a moment. Don't you understand?"

"Yes, sah, in a jiffy. May I, please, Mas'r Mark, may I help you wid it?"

"Help me with what? Are you taking leave of your senses?"

"No, sah. I do't I might give some 'sistance down-stairs wid dat 'ting."

"What 'ting? Confound it; what are you talking about?"

"De jibby. I's mighty strong, Mas'r Mark."

The young man smiled, and said: "I guess I'll manage it myself, Mattie. You can go."

The woolly-head disappeared, and Mark Blanchard sighed as he said: "I don't know what the reason everybody likes me, even to that poor ignorant nigger. I used to feel proud of this, but now I am so unworthy of love and kindness, that every attention appears to wound rather than please me."

He looked into the mirror on the ivory mantelpiece, gave a few strokes to his silken mustache, and then whistling an air from "Marta," went down to the elegant breakfast-room where his uncle awaited him.

Gabriel Blanchard was a gentleman of sixty-five, with stylish side-whiskers of a sheeny, silvery hue, and large, kindly blue eyes. His mouth, too, was large, and his chin was broad and massive, evidencing the strength of will which was his chief characteristic.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, uncle. I hope the old gentleman's appetite is not impaired however," said Mark, as he approached the table, at which his uncle was already seated.

Gabriel looked up. He did not smile, but after a pause, answered:

"No, thanks to a vigorous constitution, and the good care I had the sense to bestow upon it, my appetite is not easily destroyed. Had I indulged in as late hours as my nephew does, I, doubtless, would not have this to say at sixty-five."

The young man bit his lip, and answered hesitatingly: "I had business to transact away down in the First District last night, and that accounts for my absence to such a late hour."

"I am not angry, Mark," said Gabriel, evidently pleased at the apology, and the manner of his protest; but, a young man contemplating matrimony, should train himself to early hours. Fast young men are by no means desirable husbands, and Miss Davenant is very particular in this respect. You are very fortunate in securing such a wife."

"I shall endeavor to make her happy; that's all I can do, uncle," replied the younger man, seating himself at the breakfast-table.

"I am glad to hear you say so. It shows a proper spirit, and I know you can make her happy, too. Do you know, Mark, had you chosen any other girl in Louisiana, your income would have been curtailed, at least, five thousand a year? But, as you have displayed such excellent taste, and done honor to the judgment of the Blanchards, I have made up my mind to settle upon you a snug sum. What do you say to one hundred thousand and the Plaquemine plantation?"

"Oh, my dear uncle!" exclaimed Mark, "you really take away my breath. I am not deserving of this—upon my word, I—"

"There, there, now, I have said it, and it shall be so."

The young man's face glowed with a new light, and he was about to pour forth a fresh stream of thanks, when Gabriel motioned him to remain silent, saying, in a low voice, and with an uneasy glance around the room:

"But, there is a reservation in favor of another person, or persons, and it is of this I wish now to speak to you."

Again the old man glanced around as if fearful of being overheard, and then added:

"Let's go to the library; I can not tell you here."

They arose, and passing through a long corridor, entered a sumptuously furnished apartment. The furniture was of ebony, and the walls were lined with heavily carved book-cases, filled with volumes in fine calf and expensive morocco.

The old man pointed his nephew to a seat, and sinking into one himself, threw his head back and looked up at the ceiling for a moment or two.

At length he said:

"I am not, or, at least, I was not always, a crusty old fellow, such as most people believe me to be. I have a heart somewhere which all these years of money-making has not made callous, and once—"

a great many years ago—I gave all the wealth of love that heart contained to a poor orphan girl in Virginia. She did not return my passion, but gave herself to another."

"This, of course, maddened me; and, six months after she became his wife, I made her a widow."

Mark Blanchard started and looked frightened. Gabriel, noticing this, continued:

"But, I did not murder her; we met as equals: the chances were rather against me, but I came out victor. My bullet penetrated his left side, and while he lay dying in the arms of his friends, I fled from Roanoke to the West Indies."

"And the widow?" put in Mark.

"Poor Sybil; I never had the heart to inquire whether she lived or died."

There were tears in Gabriel Blanchard's eyes as he continued: "That's twenty years ago, and, as I have said, it appears quite forty of them. I have kept my secret well, for it never crossed my lips before."

"And why have you told me this now, uncle?" asked Mark.

"Because I want to make a reservation in my will in favor of Sybil Grainer, if she is living, at my death, or in favor of her heirs in case she is not."

"But, not until your death, uncle?"

"Not until my death. I could not bear to favor her or hers until the grave lifts its shade between us. Oh, Mark Blanchard, my life has been a weary one; God knows how weary."

"No doubt, dear uncle," answered Mark; "but, what am I to do in case of your early demise? Tell me."

"Search out Sybil Grainer, and give her twenty thousand dollars. Will you do this?"

"Yes, sir, I will."

The young man lifted a Bible, and kissing it, said, solemnly: "I swear!"

(To be continued.)

A HEART GUEST.

BY D.

Fair girl, I feel a deep regret
When I remember your sweet face,
To think we had not sooner met.
But that regret is soon replaced
By joy, that I wished not in vain
That we have met, and may again.

While looking in those soft brown eyes,
When they in kindness on me beamed,
I own I felt a deep surprise,
For you were better than I dreamed.
I thought you were as others are,
But found that you excel them far.

Your queenly grace and beauty move
My heart more than I dare express,
To admiration and to love.
Would that I dare on those lips press
One sweet, impassioned, rapturous kiss,
I ask no greater earthly bliss.

The Winged Whale:

OR,
THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "SCARLET HAND," "HEART OF FIRE,"
"WOLF DEMON," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

A STRANGE STORY.

THE Spanish captain, Estevan, was pacing up and down the narrow limits of his quarters with a restless motion, like unto the captive tiger.

Ever and anon he glanced out of the window that commanded a view of the street and the broad bay in the distance, as if he expected some one, and was watching for their approach.

"By the Virgin! but she makes a long stay!" he muttered, pulling the long ends of his mustache, reflectively. "If Roque fulfills his task, I shall know the truth. The thought of her meeting this American in secret maddens me. The girl has a will of her own. I am afraid that I shall find it a difficult matter to bend her to my purpose. I'll make the attempt, though all the fiends below stand in my way and bid me stop."

And as the Spaniard looked from the window, with frowning brow, he saw the girlish form of Isabel coming down the street.

"She's returning," he muttered, as he gazed from the open casement; "but, where is Roque? Curse the fellow! I'd wager that he's asleep in some wine-house. I was a fool to trust him!"

With a light step and a joyous face, Isabel passed on, unconscious of the angry eyes that watched her from the window.

Thoughts of her sailor lover, Red Rupert, were in her mind; love for him filled her young heart. The future looked bright and beautiful. She thought not of danger, only of the minutes, so full of sweet joy, that had passed quickly away, while she stood by her lover's side and looked with blushing tenderness into his dark eyes.

The form of the girl disappeared around the angle of the wall.

The sunlight seemed less bright to the eyes of Estevan when the graceful figure and smiling face of Isabel faded from his sight.

"I have never loved woman in all my life as I love this girl," he muttered. "The passion that fills my heart is maddening in its intensity. Perhaps the flame is so fierce that it will not be a lasting one. Well, time will tell. Where can that scoundrel Roque be?"

And even with the thought, the skulking figure of the soldier appeared upon the scene.

From the unsteady step of his spy, the captain guessed at once that he was under the influence of liquor.

"The drunken rascal!" Estevan muttered, in a rage. "I'll have him tied up to the halberd, and give him a dozen lashes some fine morning."

Then Roque, gazing about with a look of owl-like gravity upon his flushed features, beheld the face of his officer looking down upon him from the window.

A beaming smile came over the soldier's face. With an air of drunken dignity, he saluted the captain and took his uncertain way to the door of the house.

"Idiot that I was to trust this drunken fool to watch Isabel!" Estevan exclaimed, in disgust. "I'll wager that he has been asleep in some den, and now comes with a lie to plead as an excuse for his failure."

A knock at the door interrupted Estevan's musings.

"Come in," he said, impatiently.

The door opened and Roque entered.

"So you have come at last!" the captain said, angrily.

"Yes, senior," replied Roque, saluting.

"And drunk, as usual!"

"What, senior captain! I drunk!" exclaimed the soldier, in a tone of injured innocence. "Ah, senior! how can you say such a thing? May my next drink be my poison if I have tasted wine since yesterday."

"Bah!" cried Estevan, in contempt; "your face is flushed and your legs unsteady."

"The effect of the heat, senior captain!" cried Roque, interrupting his officer.

"The heat!" exclaimed Estevan, contemptuously.

"Yes, senior, it is terrible hot," protested the soldier. "Ah, captain, do you think for a moment that I would wrong a noble senior, like yourself, by making a beast of myself when employed on your business? Never! I have too much honor."

"Honor!" cried Estevan, in scorn.

"Yes, senior, I am the very soul of honor!" and Roque thumped his breast vigorously.

"Enough. Did you follow the Senorita Isabel?" asked Estevan, impatiently.

"Like the wolf follows his prey!" replied the soldier, loftily.

"Where did she go?"

"To the forest that fringes the bay to the north," the soldier replied.

"And did she meet this American there?" asked Estevan, anxiously, a frown upon his face.

"I can not say, senior," replied Roque.

"How? Did you not say that you followed her?"

"Yes, senior, to the forest."

"And within the forest you lost track of her?" cried Estevan, guessing at the truth.

"Exactly, senior."

"Scoundrel, did you not swear that you would keep close watch upon her?" demanded the captain, in anger.

"Yes, senior, but it was not my fault! Hear my story, then blame me if you can!" cried Roque, with outstretched arms.

"Speak, then!" said Estevan, impatiently, a look of contempt upon his face.

"Listen, senior; it is a wonderful story!" exclaimed the soldier, impressively.

"A wonderful lie, more likely!"

"Oh, senior, you wound me by such doubts!" and Roque looked pathetic. "May I die of thinking too much cold water if I speak not the truth?"

"Go on, then."

"Obedient to your orders, I watched the senorita Isabel, leave the mansion of your father. Then I followed at a safe distance in the rear. The senorita walked along slowly until she left the city; then she quickened her steps. Just as I reached the edge of the town—just by the last house—the senorita turned round suddenly."

"She discovered you, then?"

"Yes, senior; but, who

"Thanks, noble captain," and the soldier withdrew.

"I must see Isabel at once," Estevan said, moodily.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESTEVAN DECLARES HIS LOVE.

THE Spanish officer walked slowly toward the house of the commandante.

A dark look was upon his face. It was evident that his thoughts were far from being pleasant ones.

"I must have an understanding with Isabel at once," he muttered. "I will let her see that I know of this foolish passion she has for the American. I am sure that she met him in the forest, this afternoon. The spy that dogged Roque's footsteps was probably some friend of the American, whom he had placed on the watch to prevent any one from interrupting his meeting with the girl. If my hand has not lost its cunning, I'll send this red-skinned American to the devil ere he is many days older. The heretic will be at home there. And as for Roque, she shall know that I am not to be easily deceived."

As Estevan approached the house, he saw the black, Geno, stretched out at full length in the sun.

"Where is your mistress?" the Spaniard asked.

"Up dar, sar," and the black pointed to the curtained window that looked from the second story of the mansion upon the fragrant garden.

Estevan proceeded at once to Isabel's room, knocked lightly at the door and heard the clear voice of the girl bid him enter.

Obedient to the command on the instant, Estevan entered the apartment.

Isabel was seated by the window that looked into the garden on the side of the house.

"Has the senorita entirely recovered from the fatigue of last night's ball?" the Spaniard asked, taking a chair and seating himself by the side of the girl as he spoke.

"Oh, yes," Isabel answered, slowly. She felt ill at ease in the presence of the Spanish captain. There was an awkward coldness in her manner that she could not shake off, though she strove with all her power to appear unconcerned.

"Allow me to compliment you upon your appearance last night. You were the belle of the event." My heart swelled with pride when I looked upon your loveliness, and the thought came to me that, some day, you might make me the proud master of those charms."

Isabel cast down her eyes, and a shade passed over her face. She felt that an unpleasant scene was about to occur.

"Isabel, I have never openly told you that I loved you, but you must have guessed the truth from a thousand little acts, for I have not attempted to conceal the passion with which you have inspired me," Estevan said, softly, taking the hand of the maiden within his own as he spoke.

Cold as ice, and motionless as pulseless marble, the little white hand of Isabel lay in the grasp of the Spaniard.

"Senor, I—," Isabel stammered, with downcast eyes. She knew not how to speak the truth that she felt must be told.

"May I accept this hesitation as a proof that the avowal of my love is not distasteful to you?" Estevan asked.

"With a desperate effort, Isabel spoke.

"Senor, I regret that I must speak words that may give you pain, but the truth must be told. I feel that I can never love you."

Estevan bit his lip. Isabel felt the quick throb of anger that surged through his veins in the iron-like pressure of the hand that held her own a prisoner.

"Do I understand your meaning aright?" he said, slowly; "you refuse the love I offer?"

"I can not help it, senor," Isabel replied. "If Heaven has not put the love in my heart, is it my fault?"

"And yet you told my father that you loved me?"

"No, no, senor, no!" Isabel exclaimed, quickly. "Your father asked me if my heart was free. I replied that I did not love any Pensacola gentleman. He then told me how much it would please him if I could find it in my heart to love you and become your wife. I did not wish to pain him by telling him the truth, and so foolishly held my tongue, and thus led him into error. For, even at the time when he spoke, I knew that it was impossible for me to ever love you as a wife should love her husband."

"Why impossible?" Estevan asked, his face calm, only a ripple of passion in his dark eyes.

"I can hardly tell the reason," Isabel said, in confusion. "I felt that I did not love you, and I did not deem it possible that I ever would love you."

"And you can not tell the reason why you do not and can not love me?" the Spaniard asked, coldly.

"Why ask me, a woman, for reasons?" Isabel said, evading the question. "It is my sex's privilege to act without reason."

"And yet you do not?" exclaimed Estevan, his lip curling in scorn.

The hot blush swept over Isabel's features. She guessed from the tone used by the Spaniard, as well as from his words, that her secret was either discovered or suspected.

"You do not answer," Estevan said, slowly, finding that she did not speak. "Isabel, although perhaps you have not spoken falsely, yet you have deceived both my father and myself."

"I deceive?" Isabel murmured, her cheeks still burning, and her eyes still bent upon the ground.

"Yes. When my father asked if your heart was free, you answered that you did not love any gentleman of Pensacola."

"Which was the truth," the girl said, raising her soft blue eyes to the face of the Spaniard.

"Yes; but you did not tell him that you did love a stranger—an American!" exclaimed Estevan, anger in his voice.

Again Isabel's eyes sought the floor. As she had suspected, her secret was known.

"You do not answer. Your silence confirms my words," the Spaniard said, with bitter accent.

"I neither deny nor confirm," Isabel said, slowly.

"You did deny it you would be speaking falsely. I know that you love—or think that you love—this stranger, Rupert Vane. I know that you have met him secretly in the forest to day. You dare not deny that I have spoken the truth!"

Isabel was thunderstruck. How the captain could know of her meeting with her lover in the forest passed her comprehension. The tone of Estevan, too, wounded her pride. A little hectic spot began to burn in either cheek. Mild, loving woman as she

was, yet the fire of Spanish blood burned in her veins.

"Senor, you are not my guardian," she said, firmly; "I have no account to render you in this matter. If your father chooses to question me, to him I will explain all my actions and give my reason for what I have done."

"You think that you love this vagabond stranger?" cried Estevan, fiercely. The composure of the girl irritated him almost to madness.

"Senor, you forget yourself!" exclaimed Isabel, rising to her feet; "you forget to whom you speak!"

"No, I do not!" replied Estevan, scornfully. "I am speaking to a foolish girl who does not know what she is doing—what acts of folly she is committing. But I will save you from this base adventurer in spite of yourself. You shall not walk blindfold to ruin, if my hand can keep you from it."

"I can not longer listen to such language!" exclaimed Isabel, impatiently. "Shall I leave the room, or will you?"

Estevan gazed at the angry girl for a moment in silence, the fire flashing from his dark eyes; then he turned upon his heel, and, without a word, strode out of the room.

The anger of the Spaniard was so great that he did not dare to trust himself to speak.

Isabel watched the door close behind the rejected suitor, and then, with a sigh of relief, sank again into her seat.

"I feared this," she murmured, with downcast eyes. "I feared lest they should discover my love for Rupert, but I did not dream that my secret meeting with him in the forest would be revealed. This terrible man must have employed some one to watch me." Then a sudden thought occurred to her. "Oh! I remember now," she said, quickly; "the soldier who went into the wine-house. I guessed at the time that he was a spy upon my actions. He must have followed me into the wood, and, concealed by the bushes, have watched my meeting with Rupert."

Then, for a few moments Isabel was silent; her brain busy in thought. "I must steal forth to-night and see Rupert, at all hazards," she said, firmly, and with evident determination. "He must know that the secret of our love is known to the man who should be the last in the world to know it. It is useless grieving over the past; danger threatens in the future; we must take measures to meet it."

Thoughtfully the fair girl leaned her head upon her hand and tried to devise some plan, by means of which she could steal from the house and meet her lover upon the sea-washed plaza, where the mantle of night covered in the earth. The difficulty was, to think of some plan to elude the watchful eyes that she was sure would be upon her.

Leaving Isabel to her own busy thoughts, we will follow the footsteps of the Spanish captain.

Estevan's brows were dark with rage as he descended the stairs. He ground his teeth together, fiercely.

"By the Mass, she defies me!" he cried, in anger, communing with himself. "She is proud of her love for this cursed American. Perhaps she thinks that his sword is destined to settle my aspirations for her hand, forever. By Heaven! I am impatient for the time when I shall face him, steel in hand. If his skill be more than mine, I am content to die. Would that to-morrow were Monday, so that the affair could be settled at once; but no, it is better as it is," he said, thoughtfully. "Between now and Monday much may happen," and as he spoke, a dark look, full of treacherous meaning, passed over his face.

Then Estevan descended into the street. A brother officer happening to pass at the moment, Estevan accosted him.

"Lieutenant, a moment, please."

The officer, a little swarthy fellow, by name Cadova, approached. His reputation was far from being good, as he was noted as a bully and a gamester, besides being one of the most determined duelists in the Spanish service.

"At your service, captain," Cadova said. "Lieutenant, I have a favor to ask at your hands."

"Command me."

"I wish you to act as my second in a little affair that I have on hand."

"Certainly—delighted!" The eyes of the lieutenant sparkled with joy. Next to fighting a duel himself, he liked to assist at one.

"Who is the party?"

"Did you notice two strangers at the ball last night?"

"Americans?"

"Yes."

"Friends of Senor Garcia?"

"Yes."

"I saw them. Which one?"

"The shorter of the two; the one whose face is reddened like an Indian's."

"What is the cause of the affair?"

"He looked too long at a lady that I fancy, then took a walk by moonlight, and a man shot at him from behind a bush. He charged that I tried to murder him and has challenged me," Estevan said, in explanation.

"These Americans are so suspicious," the lieutenant exclaimed, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Yes; come to my quarters and I'll explain every thing."

So arm in arm the two proceeded.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW FOE.

ON the broad veranda that surrounded the house of the merchant, sat the two Americans and their host, Senor Garcia.

The moon, sailing high in the heavens, cast its bright light over town and bay.

Garcia examined his watch. Rupert had explained to him the favor that he sought at his hands.

"It is nearly half-past nine," Garcia said, "almost time for your guide to come."

"Do you think that the captain really means to fight?" asked Rupert.

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly," Garcia replied; "he is treacherous, as his attempt on your life proved, but not a coward. Besides, should he refuse to meet you, he would lose what little reputation he possesses. I have no doubt though that if he could find a chance to take your life secretly, he would not hesitate a moment to do so."

"Yes, the explanation is easy. You have challenged him; he can not avoid meeting you. He probably relies on his skill in the use of the sword to remove you from his path."

"But why this haste after expressly stating to Andrews here that he would not meet me until Monday?" Rupert asked.

"Possibly from a wish to get the affair off his mind as quickly as he can. I confess, his haste puzzles me, and I can think of no other reason for it than the one I have given."

"Is he pretty cute with the sword?" Andrews asked.

"Yes," he hears the reputation of being one of the best swordsmen in the Spanish army," Garcia replied.

"I say, cap'n, you'll have to try one of your neat touches on him, like you showed the English officer on the deck of the Bull Dog. I never saw a critter finished so quickly in all my born days. Your sword went through him like a streak of greased lightning."

"You are expert with the sword then, Senor Rupert?" Garcia asked.

"Yes; when I was quite a lad I learned to handle the weapon," Rupert replied.

"Believe me, you will need all your cunning for this captain is a master of fence."

"Hello! here's somebody coming up the street!" cried Andrews, hastily.

By the light of the moonbeams they saw a slender figure approaching rapidly.

"Is it our man?" Rupert said, rising.

"I think it is," Andrews replied, after a good look at the approaching stranger. Although the night was warm, he had a cloak wrapped around him.

The youth—for it was the young man that had brought the message of the Spanish captain—bowed as he ascended the steps that led to the veranda.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting, senors," he said, in a frank and open manner.

"A few minutes only," Rupert replied. "Allow me to introduce my friend, Senor Garcia."

The youth bowed.

"The senor will accompany us?" the youth asked.

"Yes."

"You are all ready?"

"Yes."

"Let us set out, then; twenty minutes walk will bring us to the place of meeting."

"Proceed."

The three followed the messenger of Estevan, left the town behind, and pursued a path by the water, leading to the forest. Ere long, they came to a little opening in the wood.

By the light of the moonbeams they saw a dark figure, wrapped in a cloak, standing near a tree on the upper edge of the opening.

Andrews nudged Rupert and called his attention to the cloaked figure.

"There he is," the Yankee said, in a whisper.

Garcia looked at the motionless man with a puzzled expression upon his face.

"I do not think that that is the captain," he said, in a guarded tone, to the two Americans. "He is taller than Senor Estevan."

The doubt was soon verified, for, as they advanced, the man in a cloak came toward them, and the three friends saw that they looked upon the face of a stranger.

"The doctor, gentlemen," said the youth. The stranger bowed, opened his cloak, and displayed the shining blades of two swords.

"User instruments for a doctor?" muttered Andrews, and, as he spoke, he surveyed the face of the stranger attentively. Then a sudden flash of recognition passed over the shrewd features of the Yankee. "A doctor," he muttered; "if he is, he can take my head for a football. He's more used to giving wounds than curing 'em. I don't understand this a bit."

As Andrews stood a little apart from Garcia and Rupert, his muttered words were unheeded by them.

The youth approached the stranger whom he had introduced as the doctor.

"You are not going to be so mad as to carry out this insane idea?" the man muttered, in an undertone, to the youth.

"I will, though my own life pay the forfeit," he replied, firmly.

"By heaven! I will not consent to it. I have been as mad as you to allow this to go as far as it has," exclaimed the man, passionately.

"How will you prevent it?" the youth asked, with a quiet smile.

"Three words from me, and the whole mad affair will come to a stand-still."

"But you will not speak those three words?"

"I will!" cried the stranger, doggedly.

"You will not," replied the youth, in the same quiet tone he had used before, his cool manner forming a strange contrast to the angry passion of the other.

"Who will prevent me from speaking?" questioned the stranger, with a growl.

"I will."

"By heaven, you will not!" the cloaked man exclaimed. "This madness has gone far enough. I'll save you in spite of yourself."

"How many times shall I tell you that you say I will not speak; that you will do exactly as I say?" asked the youth, a sad smile on his handsome face.

"I will not!" stubbornly replied the other. "You shall not commit this act of madness. I have the power to prevent it, and I intend to use that power, although you implore me a thousand times to remain quiet. I have been a fool to let you go as far in this affair as you have already gone."

"You forget, then, the oath that you once swore?" And the youth looked the other straight in the eye, the same sad smile playing about his lips.

"The oath," said the "doctor," slowly.

"Yes, the oath that you took without my asking you to take—the oath which hitherto you have sacredly kept, even at the risk of life, but which now you declare you will break."

"And is it not better that I should break it," he asked, in a sullen way.

"No; and since you will not listen to reason, I must recall your oath to your memory. You have known me since childhood. One day I came to you and said that the time had come for us to part. What answer did you make to me?"

"I knelt to you, as I should to Heaven alone, and begged you not to drive me from you; swore that I would serve you faithfully, protect you from all evil, even give you my life to save you from harm; that your lightest wish should be as law to me. All I asked was that I might serve you and guard you like a faithful dog."

"And you have kept that oath till now."

"I break it to save you."

"And if you do, that instant parts us forever," the youth said, firmly.

"You drive me from you!" cried the strong man, in despair.

"No; blame your own act, not me."

"You would drive away the faithful dog who would lay down his life to save you from harm?" and tears glistened in the dark eyes of the man as he asked the question.

"I meant the youth looked into his face, and then, silently he extended his hand, which was like and white as snow."

The other grasped it with a fervent pressure, and looked imploringly into the face of the youth.

"No, I do not drive away the man who compares himself to a faithful dog, but who is more like a brother, a loving and tender brother, who has borne with all my wayward caprices without a murmur. It is your act, not mine. Baptiste, I solemnly vow to you, as I hope for mercy hereafter, I would rather that you should take one of these weapons and plunge it into my heart than to have you stay me from acting in this matter."

"You would?" and Baptiste—as he was called—looked at the youth with heavy eyes.

"Yes; do you hesitate now?"

"But the danger!" he pleaded.

"Have you not been my instructor?" the youth asked, a confident smile upon his face.

"True, but—"

"You consent; but you growl as you consent."

"I can not help it. You know the reason," he replied, softly.

The eyes of the youth were cast upon the ground for a moment; he was evidently confused.

"Do not speak of that again, Baptiste," the strapping youth, slowly, an expression of pain upon his face.

"Forgive me!" said Baptiste, impetuously.

"Yes," and the little hand of the youth pressed the brown hand of the other firmly, for a moment. Then the youth turned to where stood the three friends. They had watched the lengthened conversation with some little astonishment. They supposed, however, the non-arrival of Don Estevan was the cause of it.

The youth advanced toward the three, and Rupert stepped forward to meet him.

"Are you tired of waiting, senor?" asked the youth, politely.

"To speak truth, I am getting somewhat impatient," Rupert replied.

"Senor, it grieves me to confess to you that I have deceived you," said the youth, suddenly.

"Deceived me!" exclaimed Rupert, amazed, while his friends looked at each other in silent wonder.

"Yes, I am not the second of Don Estevan. He knows nothing of this appointment. I stand ready to take his place. You must fight me, senor!" the youth exclaimed.

"Fight you?" Rupert exclaimed, in wonder.

"Well, of all the 'tarnal ideas!' muttered Andrews, aside to Garcia.

"I do not understand it," the Spaniard said to the Yankee, in astonishment.

"This Spanish bully, then, fears to meet the man whose life he has attempted, assassin-like!" exclaimed Rupert, a sneer curling his lips.

"Senor, you wrong the captain!" cried the youth, quickly. "Again I say, he knows nothing of this meeting. It is a device of mine to have you fight me instead of him. Surely it can not matter to you whom you cross swords with?"

"You are a boy, no match for me," said Rupert, in contempt.

"Prove that by fighting me!" cried the strapping, fiercely.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

Agile Penne's pen is as enticing as a beautiful and intellectual woman's smile. His "Strange Stories" are such, and how delightfully told! His City Life Mirror is one that catches many a shadow and fitting figure which escapes ordinary eyes. We have already on file as "copy," a story from his hand, to run through several numbers, entitled, "The Detective's Ward"—as strange and exciting a narrative as any thing yet given from his versatile pen.

The Ninth Census.—The following table shows the population of the States and Territories of the Union, according to the census of 1870, as compared with the enumeration in 1860:

	1860.	1870.
Alabama.....	964,201	998,961
Arkansas.....	435,450	488,179
California.....	379,994	560,385
Connecticut.....	460,147	537,418
Delaware.....	111,216	125,015
Florida.....	140,424	187,656
Georgia.....	1,057,286	1,200,609
Illinois.....	1,711,951	2,539,688
Indiana.....	1,350,428	1,673,046
Iowa.....	674,913	1,191,802
Kansas.....	107,208	362,872
Kentucky.....	1,155,684	1,321,001
Louisiana.....	708,002	732,781
Maine.....	628,379	626,463
Maryland.....	687,049	780,806
Massachusetts.....	1,232,066	1,457,351
Michigan.....	749,113	1,184,296
Minnesota.....	173,023	435,511
Mississippi.....	791,305	884,170
Missouri.....	1,182,012	1,715,000
New Hampshire.....	326,073	318,300
New Jersey.....	672,035	906,794
New York.....	3,880,735	4,804,411
North Carolina.....	992,622	1,069,614
Nebraska.....	28,841	123,000
Nevada.....	6,857	42,491
Ohio.....	2,339,511	

THE Saturday Journal

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Foolscap Papers.

Thermopylae.

UNLOOSE your ears, dear readers, and lend them to me while I, as a true historian of the past, bring vividly to your recollections the terrible battle of Thermopylae.

Turning to the pages of Greeley's "What I know about Farming," I find that this celebrated mass happened subsequent to the making of the world, and in the remote eras of antiquity, years before Hendrick Hudson discovered the city of New York. It was fought between two opponents, the Greeks and the Persians, and was brought about by the Alabama claims.

Greece, you are aware, lies on the 20th page of Mitchell's Atlas, while Persia is a kingdom lying off the coast of the Pontifical Sea, in 20 degrees north longitude, and 13 degrees east latitude, and contains an area (to be very precise) of many square miles, and a population of, in round numbers, quite a lot.

The Persians had also been seriously annoyed by the Spartans stealing their chickens and getting in their watermelon patches, so Xerxes, who long had spotted Greece, swore he would not leave a grease spot of her, and raising an army with a patent derrick, he started, singing, "We are coming, Father Abraham, we are coming it rather strong."

Leonidas, hearing of the proposed raid, hastily gathered three hundred home-

guards together, armed with nothing else but swords, and grind-stones to sharpen them, and went and took his stand at the pass of Thermopylae.

There wasn't a bit of fighting, and every thing went smoothly until the appearance of the Persians, when their advance guard, composed of Louisiana regiments, came up on the Spartans on foot, and went down on their heads immediately, for the Spartans, who were all blacksmiths, with bravest arms, battled them by battalions, and then went to grinding their swords.

Xerxes, finding his men going down, but failing to come to time or anything else, ordered his artillerymen to shell the Spartans with a Little Giant corn-sheller, and the hum-bles to get the bombs ready; then, he ranged his dray-goons in single saw-file and charged the Spartans severely to behave themselves and go home to their mothers, intimating if they didn't, he would arrest them and confine them in Libby prison for stopping the procession, but the Spartans only ground their swords again, and whetted them on their boots, and stood their ground against the irresistible tide of the enemy, that swept down upon them with brooms, and immediately went back to dust.

Did you ever fall off a fence and try to run your head through a brick pavement? If so, you can imagine the utter impossibility of the Persians piercing the Spartan lines.

Xerxes sent a messenger, asking if they would surrender, and what their terms would be. They returned an answer that their terms were cash; and that, under no earthly consideration, would they consent to move until the first of May, which is general moving day, and that they would continue to wage war until they got better wages.

Xerxes, boiling overboard with rage and vexation, seized a buggy-whip and attempted to drive them from their position, but they stood by their guns and showered bricks into the brick-ades of the enemy, whereby they made lots of brick kilns.

Up to this time the Spartans had only lost 280 men, but the battle showed no signs of stopping until the fighting was ended.

The brave Leonidas, amid all the hue and cry, continued to cry and hew down the Persians, only stopping once to light his pipe and adjust his cravat. His Toledo blade flashed in the sun like the spokes in a new carriage-wheel, and heads flew off about as fast as they do at the commencement of a new administration; and large bodies of troops, you know, are not worth much for active service without heads, heads being, as you also know, indispensable. Where would we wear our hats if we hadn't heads? Think of it seriously! But, let us not run into metaphysics, as if we had already lost our heads.

At this time all the brave three hundred Spartans were alive except two hundred and ninety-six men, and they showed no signs of going home to supper, and as they had only two million men to oppose they fought braver than ever, with six swords in each hand, firing their revolvers with their toes; while the Persians continued to come down like a sheep on the fold. At nightfall there was one Spartan left, and with a turning-lathe he succeeded in turning the chromatic scale of battle, and the Persians were sole proprietors of a number one defeat. The remaining Spartan didn't remain long, but he bothered to tell the news and brag about the fight and get the nomination for sheriff of the county, but he fell into a misstatement of the facts and broke his neck, and never got over it. So, beware, my friends, how you fall into misstatements, unless you have extra confidence in your necks.

Now, as the battle of Thermopylae is over, I must go down-town and buy some dried herring, as my wife is to have a little party this evening in honor of a new set of false teeth which she just got to-day. May this battle never occur again!

Yours with pride,

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

HELP.—It is a lovely word; and it should be an awful reflection that heaven gives the working of its solemn spell to almost every one on earth.

POLITENESS.

Oh, rare virtue! that should be as common as water and as free as the air!

To a young man, starting in life, we say, be sure that a large stock of politeness is included in your baggage, and don't be afraid of using it freely. Give it to the world on every possible occasion. It is astonishing how a liberal stock of politeness, and a free use of the aforesaid article, will help a young man in the battle of life.

You ask a man a civil question; he answers you gruffly, rudely; you thank him politely, as if he has done you a great service, and had answered in the most civil of tones. You heap coals of fire on his head. Your politeness teaches him what a surly brute he has been. Few men in this world have the cuticle of the rhinoceros, and that alone defies the keen-pointed lance, politeness.

Young men, never travel without that useful weapon, ready in your tongue and hand, to fling at the head of the mortal who dares to forget the great principles of common courtesy.

Politeness has made men and fortunes many a time since the world was young.

The dashing cavalier, Sir Walter Raleigh, won the favor of the virgin queen, Elizabeth, by stripping off his ruff velvet cloak and casting it over a maddly spot, so that her Grace of England might not soil her dainty slipper. The act of politeness cost Sir Walter his cloak, but gained him the favor of his sovereign. Step by step he mounted, until he stood among the first of England's peers.

A stranger enters the mansion of a Spanish gentleman. "My house and all within it are yours!" exclaims the courteous host, in stately politeness. It is but a form—a simple joining of words without actual meaning—yet the custom has given Spain the first place among all nations for politeness.

You admire a Spaniard's horse.

"You like the animal? It is yours, senor."

Again, there is no real meaning in the sentence. The polite host does not intend to give you the horse, and would be greatly astonished if you should take him at his word and attempt to take the beast away with you. It is but a custom.

In olden times, when men's hearts glowed with loyalty, and they looked upon the man who wore the kindly crown as being something better than the rest of humans, when, in the drinking bout, they filled their glasses for the first toast, "The King," once the glasses were drained, out of the window they went. The idea being that the beakers should never be soiled by a less noble toast.

That was politeness in another form.

In our far western wilds, where Judge Lynch reigns supreme, and the principles of law are in the breasts of rugged, hard-handed men, even there the code of politeness holds its sway.

The man who refuses a civil invitation to drink—to "poison himself," as the western argot hath it—is no gentleman.

The rough fellow who was sentenced to be hung by the vigilantes, for relieving a miner of his gold-dust in the canon, who begged to be hung at nine in the morning instead of ten, as he "generally" had the "shakes" 'bout that ere time, and the judge generously granted his request, thanked the chief of the vigilantes for his politeness.

So, go where you will, from where the "Yankee" leering o'er the Straits of Behring, and Alaska's icebergs are washed by the northern waves, to Africa's burning strand, where the naked savage roams with spear and shield, you will find politeness, in some shape.

Cultivate it! make much of it! it is the oil that causes the wheels of life to run smoothly.

CATS.

I suppose if I were to tell you I liked cats, you'd call me "an old maid," not that I'd care a great deal about it, anyway, but it's best to keep in the good graces of the entire reading public, so I'll only just mention to you, that I don't crave for the society of feline animals, and I wouldn't wear mourning, or wet my cheeks with tears, if brother Tom were to exterminate the race of his namesakes. So much on that head.

There are women in this world, and men, too, who I think were intended for cats instead of human beings. Notice their soft velvet paws as they beg some favor of you, and then offend them, I'll be bound you'll see the claws, and feel them, too.

That person, who creeps around your house with stealthy tread and catlike caution, take my word for it, means "mischievous," and if you don't hear some rumors regarding yourself, then I am no prophet.

A cat will kill a bird, eat it, wash her paws, and look up in your face, as though she said, "I don't see who could have eaten that canary." Can't you think of some individual who bears a resemblance to that cat?

Hasn't some one been casting aspersions upon your character, and said foul things about you, and then licked her paws—I mean washed her hands—and put on a grave-yard look, saying, at the same time, "How can people talk so about their neighbors?" It's a shame to have such prying busybodies about.

Hah! I hate these cats. I want to have a person candid, upright and outspoken, not palaver before your face, and babble you when you haven't the ghost of a chance to defend yourself. It always makes me shiver to hear a catlike tread. I know that mischief will follow in its wake. An honest person will allow the ground to feel the pressure of his feet. But it's hateful to hear these mischief-makers stealing along and pouncing in upon you, before you have time to settle yourself. We, all of us, have things to say we don't care about every one's over-hearing, and it don't put us into any kind of a good humor to know some one has been overhearing all we have said.

Hallo! Here comes another cat. This time it comes in the shape of an anonymous correspondent, who wishes Eve to write to him on Love! I beg your pardon: I don't write to promiscuous people, and especially to those who are ashamed to write more than their initials. When a man is not willing to sign his name fair and square to a letter, it doesn't strike me that he can be any too proud of it. This anonymous letter-writing is of too catlike a nature to suit me, and I believe all my readers will have the same opinion.

Have I any more cats handy? I think so. Imagine you have written a poem; some friend praises it, stroking your fur the right way, figuratively speaking. Let another friend tell you of its faults, rubbing the fur contrariwise, won't you spit, and scratch,

and mew something about somebody's having no taste? Why are we plagued with so many catlike attributes?

I know we love to be praised, but when a person gives us a candid opinion, it isn't fair to show our claws. It is best to be sincere, and we can do it, too, without hurting any one's feelings. This striking of claws into persons, just because they don't praise you up to the seventh heaven, is perfectly abominable, and to all such I would say: "Go away, pussy; you're treacherous, and treachery is not wanted as either friend or companion," by

EVE LAWLESS.

A PLEA FOR THE BABIES.

WHILE societies are being formed for the prevention of cruelty to animals, some benevolent person ought to form one for the prevention of cruelty to babies.

What the helpless little ones suffer, no one can tell, unless a baby itself could. But, unfortunately, they are denied the blessed privilege of talking, and so must bear whatever any one chooses to put upon them, without protest.

Now, I know about as much about the care of babies, by practical experience, as a North American Indian warrior does, but I am, I trust, gifted with ordinary common sense, and I solemnly protest against subjecting infants to such inhuman barbarities as many of them are subjected to—and that, too, by Christian mothers who would do any thing to save their children pain.

Ignorance, of course, is the root of the evil. But, for goodness sake, tell me if there is anybody so stupid that they do not know that a baby does not want its shoes laced so tightly around its fat little ankles that the flesh above them projects straight over on every side to the distance of half an inch?

Let any woman lace her own shoes so, and she would very soon complain of pain from impeded circulation. Snap! would go the string, and off would come the shoe, in short meter; but, a baby can neither ask to have its shoes removed, nor remove them. I wonder if women really think that the blood need circulate no further than a child's ankles? It would seem, judging from appearances, that many of them do.

And then, too, the absurd way that some mothers have of pinning an infant's clothing so tightly to its body, that it possesses no mobility than a stick! Women will compress their own chests in corsets to look small, and their great vanity enables them to endure the pain it causes them, but babies are innocent of any such ignorant and vulgar notions of gentility, and want their clothing loose enough to be comfortable.

Who can limit the evil consequences growing out of this criminal practice of compressing the yielding chest of a growing child? They are almost infinite in extent, and yet mothers persist in doing it.

An old Scotchman once said that "many a baby dies for want of wattle," and I am inclined to think that he was not so far wrong. Milk is food, not drink, and if any one has faith in the thirst-quenching qualities of the bovine fluid, I would advise them to test it by drinking nothing else some summer day when the mercury is at ninety-six degrees in the shade.

Apropos of giving milk to babies—I once saw a woman give a seven-months old baby a large saucerful of strong tea, while eating her own dinner, and her smilingly complacent reply to my protest was, that "he liked it!" Strange, too, when she had learned of him!

I begin to think that, while other sense is plentiful, common-sense is scarce. But, while there are so many mothers—and very young ones at that, there must, of course, be the errors of ignorance. And in the very face of this fact, a certain well-known physician strongly advocates very youthful marriages!

SMITHERS' LAST SENSATION!

It is not often I step out of the legitimate line of doing business, and rush after the sensational, yet, I am forced to confess, that numerous causes have induced me to do so, much as I have every reason to repent of my so doing. In the first place, the receipts of my show have been "small by degrees, and beautifully less," until eatables and drinkables were scarce in the lander. Secondly, Mrs. Smithers pestered me almost to death to do it. I have always seconded the lady's wishes. When we were courting, I did it for love; but since we have been married, I have done it from obligation.

Mrs. S. thought we did not excite enough attention as we entered the numerous places where we held forth, and, as a natural consequence, the people were not so clamorous for admittance as they should be. "Something must be done to draw the populace, and make them come. Couldn't you and Debility Joseph go through the principal streets, turning somersets?" asked my life partner.

"No," I answered, energetically and decidedly. "We couldn't, could you?"

Mrs. S. blushed, and murmured, "Chicago."

Chicago and divorce seem to be synonymous with the showman's wife.

"I have a plan whereby our show will create a sensation. Let us enter the village as though we were not ashamed to belong to the company of a traveling 'Moral and Instructive Show,'" said Mrs. S.

"What would you like to do, Mrs. S.?" Would it gratify you to dress in the primitive costume of Mameza, and be drawn through the streets, lashed to the bare back of some steed?"

"You are dull of comprehension. Let us rig up a team, and call it 'The Three Beauties.'"

"But where can we get these three beauties?"

"Your wife, your child and our son's wife can represent them. Would we not look noble in a triumphal car?"

"Would it pay?"

"Pay? I guess it would! We should attract more notice than we ever did before. It must be done." Those four last words generally make a scheme decisive.

An old tumble-down team, that had seen its best days, was called into requisition, and trimmed fantastically with our patriotic blankets. In the center and attached to each portion of the team, was some blue canvas, supposed to be waves, under which Debility Joseph turned and tumbled to represent the waves in a violent commotion. A large barrel was placed in the middle of the team, upon which the figure of Mrs. S. stood in the classic character of "Minerva." For a spear she carried the bass-viol bow, and her shield looked something like our tin dust-pan, which, in fact, it really was. My

child and heiress, clad in the garments of "Joan of Arc," knelt at my wife's feet. An angel of sweetness she looked. Debility's wife was supposed to be the "Herald of Joy," and for her trumpet, she used a copy of the "New York Herald," so that people would know just what character she impersonated. I was to drive the old sorrel horse with one hand, and beat the drum with the other. Mrs. Smithers said it would create a sensation, and it did!

The first morning this effect was to be tried, was raw and blustering, and there were signs of snow in the air. I proposed having it delayed to a future day. But Mrs. S., who always has poetry with which to quote, in case of emergency, replied, "We must not delay!"

"Trust no future, however pleasant, Let us all now drive ahead, It is better to go than wish you had, The meaning of which you know is 'nuff sed.'"

Does not Mr. Longfellow so expressively himself?

"I should hope not, or if he does he must be a mighty queer poet."

But we eventually started, and, when near the wished-for village, our party struck their imposing attitudes, while I struck the big drum, and the old horse, and had a look-out for the anxiously awaiting multitude that was so expectant for our entrance.

The multitude consisted of the blacksmith and a tow-headed urchin, who was having his horse shod. Everybody else was at a funeral. Mrs. S. was cruel enough to remark, that they ought to have postponed the funeral until after we had made our triumphal entrance. We continued on our way, lamenting and bewailing our ill luck, the snow coming down all the while. We were nearing the Hall, when crack, crack went something. I turned around to see what was the matter. Such a tableau as met my gaze, I had never seen before. The entire bottom of the wagon had given way, and Mr. and Mrs. Debility, with my darling girl, were floundering in quite a promiscuous manner. The concussion of the barrel, (on which Mrs. Smithers, Sen., was standing), with the ground, was so great, as to stave in the head of the barrel. Now, said barrel was three-quarters full of molasses, so that my partner was in a tight place. To release her from her peril, I jumped off the cart, but in so doing the big drum, which was full of flour, burst over the old horse.

The church was but a few rods off, and while all this little episode was occurring, the funeral party came out. My pen is too feeble to describe the scene. Can you not imagine it? Mrs. Smithers said we should create a sensation, and didn't we do it?

SMITHERS, THE SHOWMAN.

In Edwin South's new serial, "In the Web; or, The Girl-wife's Trials," we have a romance full of love and tenderness such as is rarely met with. Read it, and enjoy a good feast.

A DEFINITION.

We have somewhere met with this definition of an effeminate man:

The effeminate man is a weak poltice. He is a cross between a root beer and a ginger pop, with the cork left out. A fresh-water mermaid found in a cow-pasture with hands filled with dandelions. He is a teacupful of syllabus—a kitten in pantalettes—a sick monkey with a blonde mustache. He is a vine without any tendrils—a fly drowned in oil—a paper kite in a dead calm.

He lives like a butterfly—nobody can tell why. He is as harmless as a cent's worth of spruce gum, and as useless as a shirt-botton without a hole. He is as lazy as a bread pill, and has no more hope than a last year's grasshopper. He goes through life on lipsoes, and dies like a cologne water spilt over the ground.

This is all well enough—as a picture; but is, like a great deal of popular criticism, very absurd. The effeminate man is, by the very name, a person of unmanly attributes; but many such are, by no means, babies, or fools. Indeed, we have known business men of marked ability to be effeminate. We know artists and writers of remarkable talent who are decidedly effeminate. We have, singularly enough, met with a master mechanic in a great iron manufacturing establishment, who was nicknamed "Miss Nancy" by the great stalwart fellows around him, for his effeminacy; but he was fairly worshiped by these very men.

No; let us be just in judging of men in class as well as men individually, and not associate the effeminate with what is mean, small and weak.

A BIT OF WISDOM.

ONE of our leading journalists, decanting on the follies and dangers of "diamond" type, says:

Nature is the most inexorable of creditors; she gives long credits, unluckily for us, but she reckons compound interest on her bills. She gives us uttermost freedom of choice; but she holds us to our bargain with implacable sternness. She never sells damaged goods, nor takes back second-hand ones which we have spoiled. We can fill our book-shelves with diamond editions, if we like, and hire somebody who knows no better to come and read them to us after we are blind.

Had the writer said "popular papers," which have infinitely vaster circulation than books, how pointed would have been the lesson! Small type and muddy print are sure, sooner or later, to call for pay in weakened vision and premature decay of the precious eyesight.

BANES AND ANTIDOTES.

THE bane of domestic life is littleness, falsity, vulgarity, harshness, scolding, vociferation, and incessant issuing of superfluous prohibitions and orders, which are regarded as impertinent interferences with the general liberty and repose, and are provocative of rankling or exploding resentments. The blessed antidotes that sweeten and enrich domestic life are refinement, high aims, great interests, soft voices, quiet and gentle manners, magnanimous tempers, forbearance from all unnecessary commands or dictation, and general allowances of mutual freedom. Love makes obedience lighter than liberty. Man wears a noble allegiance, not as a collar, but as a garland. The Graces are never so lovely as when seen waiting on the virtues; and where they thus dwell together, they make a heavenly home.

No affection, save friendship, has any sure enemy in it. Friendship ought, therefore, always to be cultivated in love itself, as its only certain guard and preservative, not less than as the only sufficient substitute in its absence. A couple joined by love without friendship, walk on gunpowder with torches in their hands.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future editions.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamp accompanies the inclosure, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book Ms., and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the mails at "Book rates."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy;" third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note also paper as most convenient to edit and compose, leaving off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find it ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

Can not use MS. by Haven Daleswood. No stamps.—"Marian's Mistake" is not available. No stamps.—The same in regard to "A Filled Scheme." MS. as a composition, quite imperfect.—We return MS. by "Brute Avenge," having an overstock of that class of matter.—"Gale Driven" we accept.—Poem, "Fanny," and "Little essay," Hypocrite," we can not use. No stamps.—We will try and give place to some of the poems enclosed by J. P., but return the sketch and two poems as unavailable. The paper shall be mailed regularly. Will try and give place to poem, "Sacred Shrine." Must say nay to "Boat Ahoy!" "A Shark Hunt," "Along the Shore," "Ten Pina Romance," "The Bird and the Tree," "Lola's Orme's First Lover," "A Respite," "Happy-Sad and Sad-Happy," "Milla's Dream." Several of these are good enough for use in other journals but hardly up to our standard, and the fee perfectly new and well illustrated, is our motto. We can not bear with prolixity, long-spun conversations and commonplace incidents, and we will pay them a liberal fee. Geo. H. J. are really worthless. He asks for their return but sends no stamps. George must learn how to do business.

The N. Y. Dispatch, in a late issue, copies our "Fat Contributor's," "Damon and Pythias," but fails to give credit. That is dispatching by a wrong express.

Aqua Fortis is pretty sharp on the scent. His discovery, however, that one of our "very popular weeklies" is giving as original numerous English Reprints, is nothing new—we knew it long ago. These reprints all have copyright, and it is very strange that a paper so well known should try to impose such republications upon its readers as original.

Manner Haws asks to know about the astrologers who advertise so freely in certain papers, and asks: "Can they really foretell fortunes?" That depends. If you are gossamer enough to believe that they can "tell your fortune," and will pay them a liberal fee, you'll be sure to see your future husband and all that his good looks, his riches, being in exact proportion to your gullibility and the fee you pay. That is—for fifty cents he will have a freckled face and carrot hair; for five dollars he will be a splendid fellow.

A. S. B. asks why we don't illustrate all serials in the paper. Since we publish one of the most beautifully illustrated of all the story papers, he would have us give a picture on every page. We would not do so; space is too valuable, and the cost too great. We shall, however, always be governed by the principle—what will make our paper most attractive. Expense, of course, will pay them a liberal fee. We simply aim to make the SATURDAY JOURNAL the "Star of the Weeklies," and, judging from the good reports of our all-quaranters, we are following the steady and rapid advance in our circulation, we are hitting the nail on the head.

EDNA. From the brief description that you have given us of the young gentleman we are obliged to advise you. The lady who is only to be read through their actions, but conduct may be judged by external appearances and general manners and habits. Purity of language is indispensable to a gentleman, and, among young men, often stamps their character in the opinion of others. Women have an instinctive abhorrence of rudeness or impropriety of speech. Their natural delicacy revolts at coarseness. They also intensely dislike the opposite extreme, affectation, and, as a young man, to be well thought of, say not a word guarded in speech or manner. The first impression is all-important, and a modest demeanor is almost sure to make it favorable.

MELROSE wishes to know whether it is etiquette for a young man after he has taken some ladies for a walk, suddenly to leave them without a word. Certainly not. He is either very ungentlemanly or very eccentric.

H. J. R. The author you mention is not writing at present. We appreciate your complimentary remarks. The course of our correspondence will result only in injury to themselves; the old result, the engineer hoist by his own petard.

W. H. R. Aggie Penne is engaged at present upon his "Strange Stories." The serials he writes we shall present another serial from his pen, entitled "The Detective's Ward." A serial by Dr. Turner, written in his best style, will give us as our space will permit. Your handwriting is good.

SANTUM. The lady you name is a resident of Mobile, Ala. She was married recently, we believe. Her husband's name has escaped our memory. She is one of our most noted writers. Her works have been very successful.

A READER writes for information how to get into the good graces of a certain young lady of his acquaintance. We regret we can not give him a more pertinent reply. We can only recommend him to redouble his attentions, keeping in mind the old adage, "Paint her name on the wall."

R. S. When a young lady is engaged to a gentleman and walks out with him, she may take what arm she pleases, or you please to offer, without violating the proprieties of etiquette. As some men of etiquette have been instituted for the purpose of facilitating the intercourse of members of good society with one another, but not to make slaves of them. What liberty could you boast if you intended might not walk on your right, because etiquette says the left? Common sense is above custom.

A PRETENCE. The origin of glass-making dates back to ancient times. The first glass was made by chance. The Phoenicians, who were the first to make glass, were carrying niter, they stopped near a river, issuing from Mount Carmel. Not readily finding stones to melt the niter, they used the sand and a transparent matter flowed, which, in fact, was no other than glass.

FRUITS AND FLOWERS. No; smoking at an early age is decidedly unhealthy. It quickens while it weakens the heart's action, and thus debilitates the whole system. The youth of twelve, fourteen, sixteen, etc., who are now seen puffing along the streets, will not be long-lived. They may not, like the drunkard, feel the effects of their habit, but it will, in time, eventually, and the more tender the age, the stronger the effects. The use of tobacco before the age of twenty-five is therefore seriously prejudicial to sound health.

FATHER. Your son is too old, rather than too young, to enter the navy.

CATAWAS writes that he is eighteen years of age, possessed of uncommon strength, wishes to turn hunter for a few years. He asks advice. In the northern parts of New York State, there is a wilderness known as "John Brown's Tract," and abundant game. We fear that Catawbas, however, could hardly make a living by hunting. If he depends upon the products of the chase to support himself, he should not advise him to go. The woods of Maine also abound in game.

H. MASON. Eve Lawless is—Eve Lawless. Tastes differ so, that we should hesitate to pronounce any one ill-looking. We always have an overstock of poems—what good paper has not?

NEW YORK CITY. The fifteen numbers containing "The Wolf Demon" will cost you 75 cents.

MEXICO. Animal magnetism, or as it is also called, mesmerism, was first introduced into the world by Frederick Anthony Mesmer, a German physician,

GLAD WERE THOSE MOMENTS.

BY J. FLACKETT.

Glad were those moments of love without measure,
Moments of memory's joyfulest treasure:
Oh, how my spirit looks back to the past,
And grieves that it vanished in anger's rude blast!

Joys that were purest begladdened my heart,
Pure as the stream at its own fountain start.
Oh, what a future of happiness gleamed
Thro' the golden horizon whence love's beacon beamed.

Curses have followed the first fatal blow
That laid all my fondest, long-cherished hopes low,
Curses seem only futurity's store,
And cursed, and lost is my soul evermore.

Why have I passed through the battle's rude din,
To suffer a far drearer contest within?
Bleeding from wounds which are sorer by far
Than the horridlest wounds of a physical war?

Better were death on the dread fields of strife,
Than fortune prolonged by so saddened a life!
Curses, I say, on the fates that have spared
From a merciful death to the sorrows since shared!

Would that that gem again could be mine,
Whose virtues more brilliant than pure diamonds
shine!

Would that my life could atone for the past,
And turn for a moment the force of the blast!
All that is and in effect would be sweet
Joys so long lost were returned complete;

Skies, long overshadowed, resplendent would glow,
And heaven were shared in a measure below.

Strange Stories.

THE LILY OF FRANCE;
OR,
The Maid of Orleans.

BY AGILE PENNE.

A GREEN valley, overshadowed by wooded heights. Through the valley, like a silver serpent, winds the River Loire, the fairest of all fair France's streams. The sunlight—for it was noonday—gleamed down and kissed the rippling water, daintily.

A little rude road wound through the valley, following the course of the stream.

In a glade, between the river and the road—a sylvan nook, fit for the fawns of fable to sport in—were a score or so of stout men-at-arms.

Lazily the soldiers reclined at ease upon the tufted surface of the earth; their weapons were near at hand, ready for use. The horses of the party champed their heavy bits and impatiently pawed the earth in the wood near by.

From the fashion of the armor of the soldiers, as well as from their ruddy faces, blue eyes, and flaxen hair, one could have told that they were English lances, riding under the Red Cross banner.

Two of the soldiers sat a little apart from the rest. One was a man of middle age; his armor was rusty, and bore the telltale marks of many a desperate fight. He was called Peter Thompson, though more commonly known as Black Peter, one of the boldest blades of all that great class of soldiers known as Free Lances—a hardy soldier, who had often rode to victory when the war-cry, "St. George and England" sounded in the van. His companion was a young man—nephew to Black Peter, and had just arrived from England. It was his first campaign.

The men-at-arms, who reposed so carelessly in the little glade, followed the banner of an adventurer known as "Seaton the Scot." Why they lay thus in ambush, by the green banks of Loire's silver water, our story will tell.

"Uncle," said the nephew, Ralph, "prithce tell me why we wait here? For full six hours have we laid in ambush and yet no living soul, excepting a wolf, has appeared on the road."

"Patience, Ralph," replied Black Peter; "I know no more of the intentions of our leader, the Scot, than you, except that, just before we set out on this expedition, he told me that he hoped to capture a prize that would make all our fortunes."

"And what think you is the prize?"

"I know not. Early this morning a peasant sought our head-quarters in yonder town of Caen, and had a secret interview with our leader. When he departed, I heard the clink of gold in his pocket. Now, I know the pockets of the Scot are not well lined, for, ever since this she-fiend from below, Joan of Arc, has led the French forces, we, English lances, have got nothing but hard blows and sound thrashings."

"Who is this Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans?" questioned the nephew; "your soldiers speak of nothing else."

"Who is she? a devil from burning flames, say I!" cried the Free Lance, in a rage.

"She first appeared when we lay before Orleans, and held the town in a grip of iron. Thrice had the French king, Charles, attempted to raise the siege, and thrice had he retreated in disorder. Then, suddenly, appeared this girl, Joan of Arc, whom some call the 'Virgin Maid,' and others, the Lily of France."

"She was a peasant girl, and lived in some little village, Arc, I think, and from it she took her name. Near her village was a large oak, said to be haunted. From this oak a spirit appeared to Joan, bade her buckle on armor and lead the lances of France to victory. Thus inspired, she sought the French king, and, at his court, picked him out from a group of others, although she ne'er had seen him before. She told of the mission which Heaven had called upon her to perform. She led the French troops, donning armor like a man; beat us soundly before Orleans, and raised the siege. Since that time, disaster has followed our banner. We held nearly all France, but now, town after town, province after province, has been torn from us. Wherever the Lily of France displays her white banner, our soldiers fly in disorder from the field. Within another year, we shall be obliged to slink back to England like whipped curs, if we do not break the charm that binds French victory to the presence of the Maid."

Then, along the little road rung out the sound of a charger's hoofs, and a knight, clad in black armor, rode rapidly along. Surrounding his helmet was the Scottish lion; the scarf of plaid flowed across his breast, told that the rider was Seaton, the Scot.

"To horse, my lads!" he cried, his features blazing with a strange excitement.

A few minutes and the Free Lances were in the saddle and formed in the road.

The Scot gave the command, "Forward," and the soldiers rode on.

Black Peter rode by the side of Seaton, in the advance.

"The prey in sight, noble captain?" he questioned.

"Ay, and a rich one, too; worth a king's ransom!" cried the Scot, slapping his mailed hand upon his side, in glee.

"Will he not be alarmed at our approach, and fly?"

"No; Stout Dick Shaw, with five lances, holds the road beyond. Our prey is already in the trap."

A sudden turn of the road, and the soldiers saw before them a woman, humbly clad like a peasant girl, seated upon a mule, and quietly coming along the road.

She stopped in alarm when the mail-clad men came swooping like hawks down upon her.

The face of Seaton, the Scot, wore an expression of fierce joy as he reined in his steed and gazed upon the pale, spiritual features of the girl.

"You are my prisoner, lady!" he cried.

The English lances were astonished. They had expected to encounter a warlike foe as they pressed onward, lance in hand, not a weak woman.

"Surely, you do not mean that I am your prisoner!" the girl said, in surprise. "Do the English soldiers capture women?"

"You are quick to judge of our nation, lady," replied Seaton, with a tinge of joy in his face, which he did not try to suppress.

"Do you not wear English colors?" and she pointed to the scarf upon his breast.

"Scotch; it's near enough, though," the knight replied. "Please you to turn and go with us."

"With you; where?" she asked.

"To the English camp, lady. I value you so highly that I would not exchange you for the best English knight that is held captive by your French brothers. Peter, ride by the side of the prisoner. Forward!"

The men-at-arms closed in around the girl, and again they proceeded on their way.

Again the road turned, following the windings of the river. Six more of the English lances stood in a group: four mounted on their horses and two standing on the ground, with their swords at the throat of a peasant, whom they had apparently just surprised.

"Whom have you there, Dick?" asked the Scot.

"A fellow whom we caught just now skulking through the wood," the soldier replied.

"Who are you?" Seaton asked of the Frenchman.

"Only a poor hunter, searching the wood for a wild boar," replied the prisoner. The short hunting-spear that he carried in his

hand, and the horn that hung at his girdle, confirmed his words.

With a searching glance, Seaton surveyed him.

"Thou liest, knave!" he cried; "no huntsman thou, but a soldier. I have followed the trade of arms too long to be deceived. Are you a spy?"

"A spy! why should I spy where there is no English face, excepting your own, and, if I guess not wrong, you are far from the English army. But you are right, captain, I am a soldier, a deserter from the camp of Charles. I am tired of war and I am going home."

"For the present you go with us," Seaton said. "I have a suspicion that there may be French lances near at hand. Peter, take the fellow up behind you."

Again the party rode on.

"What news from the French camp?" asked the Scot. The prisoner did not reply on the instant. His eyes had caught sight of the maiden in the midst of the lances. A look of anger shot across his face. Then he quickly recovered his composure and made answer:

"Oh, wonderful news! The Lily of France, Joan of Arc, has left the army of Charles. Having seen him crowned at Rouen, and thus accomplished the mission assigned to her by Heaven, she has returned again to her village home."

"This I knew before," said Seaton, dryly.

"What of the French king? Does he not grieve at the departure of the Maid?"

"Ay, so much so, that I heard it rumored that he had sent Dunois of Orleans to pray her to return and lead on his armies to victory till not a single English banner pollutes the air of France."

"Dunois of Orleans, the bravest captain and the best lance in all France!" muttered Seaton. "Rides Dunois alone or at the head of his lances?"

"Some ten lances only, I heard it said," the prisoner replied, quietly, but as he spoke, a glance of fire shot from his eyes.

"Ten lances! we number more than that," the Scot muttered. Then a sudden thought occurred to him. "Have you seen the Maid of Orleans?"

"Oh, a thousand times!" the prisoner answered, readily.

"Look, she is my prisoner!"

"That girl the Lily of France?"

"Yes."

"You are dreaming," cried the Frenchman, laughing. "She is no more Joan of Arc than I am Dunois of Orleans!"

"Thou art a lying knave!" cried Seaton,

in anger. "I know that you girl is Joan of Arc. Ere the sun shall set England's camp will hold her prisoner."

"Be not too sure of that, noble captain," said the Frenchman, laughing lightly; "there's many a slip between the cup and the lip."

And, even as he spoke, with a giant effort he seized Black Peter's lance and hurled that worthy out of the saddle. Then, forth from the fastness of the woody delf through which the road ran, came lance after lance in battle array. The war-cry, "St. Denis and France!" rung on the air!

The Maid of Orleans—for it was indeed Joan of Arc who had fallen into the hands of the adventurers—took advantage of the confusion to seize a battle-axe from one of the soldiers by her side, and cut her way through the English ranks.

At last, by surprise, the adventurers made but a feeble resistance and soon sought safety in flight.

Seaton, the Scot, was struck down by Dunois, the famous captain of Orleans, who was the pretended deserter.

Following Joan, to persuade her to return, Dunois had learned of her capture by the English, and though leading a force double in number to the adventurers, did not dare to attack him openly, lest, in the fight, the life of Joan might be sacrificed.

The pages of history told how, in after years, the ill-fated Lily of France perished at the stake, burned to death by the order of England's king. On earth the soldier's sword and virgin's fame. In heaven the saintly crown.

The crone foiled.

A STORY OF THE SOUTH.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

"Yes, Dacres, I have reached the solemn period of man's life—three score and ten; and the many acute pains shooting athwart my bones tell me that I am rapidly nearing the 'sable shore'—that goal of all mortal. When once I lay my body down, it will not long burden the couch of death. And, Dacres, with my latter end in view, I would speak of Roland—the boy who left the parental roof with his father's curse."

A tremor shook the planter's voice as he uttered the last sentence, and, turning away

voice, and a hideous crone, trembling upon the verge of four-score years, stepped forth from a dense clump of shubbery, and paused upon the spot just vacated by the planter and his overseer.

"You may carry your hate to the 'sable shore' of which you prate, Gregory Killpason," she continued, glaring like a tigress upon the retreating men. "You may disinherit Dora, your adopted daughter, because, in one of your repentant moments, she chanced to dub your son a coward! You may bequeath her curses without number, but it will avail you nothing. I—Dora Craven's mother—will defeat your ends. Gregory Killpason, I saw you land in New York, fifteen years ago. I knew the circumstances surrounding you. I knew, too, your heart—flesh, then; since, stone. I looked ahead—many years. I left Dora in your path. You did what I thought you would do—picked her up and adopted her as a daughter. I watched her grow to womanhood in your palatial mansion. I wanted to get these skeleton fingers upon your gold. I worked hard for it; but you baffled me by banishing her. But success awaits me in the end. Yes, you are near the river of death, old man, and so am I. But I will clutch your golden bags before I die!"

As she uttered the last word, the planter disappeared among the trees; and, turning on her crutch, the old hag hobbled off.

Having described a few paces, she suddenly paused and looked toward the mansion.

"I might tell you more, Gregory Killpason," she hissed, with bitterness. "I might tell you that your son is in Charleston; but you will never see him alive, for Rough Zach, my son, is his shadow. Good-by. Let me see: 'The second right-hand drawer of the old cabinet,' he said, in a lower tone. 'Ah! I must not forget that.'"

The following day the planter's predictions were verified; his life-bark put off from the sable shore. Quite early in the morning he was seized with that fatal disease, suffusion of the heart, and expired, raving about his son.

He loved the boy he had driven from his roof with a curse, and his last thoughts in the delirium of insanity, were of him.

Preparations were at once made for the planter's obsequies, which were to take place the following day. During the evening Otto Dacres stole into the old library, unlocked the "second right-hand drawer," of the old cabinet, and looked at the will.

The thoroughly-frightened hag was coining a lie with which to answer the slave's question, when he caught sight of a paper peering from her bosom. He immediately darted forward, snatched the will from its hiding-place, and held it exultingly aloft.

"Ye ole thief!" he cried. "Ye set right down in dat at' chair till Massa Dacres comes back."

The baffled crone obeyed, trembling like an aspen leaf. Caesar's eyes never wandered from her until Otto Dacres returned, and, notwithstanding her entreaties, she was delivered over to the law, which put her beyond the power of committing crimes.

Two weeks later Roland, the banished son, unexpectedly returned to the plantation, having escaped Rough Zach, his shadow, in New Orleans. Contrary to the belief of many, Angelica had never ceased to love him, and a short time after his return he led her to the altar; while Dora, the adder, the crone and her son were leading lives of sin.

Hoodwinked:

OR,

DEAD AND ALIVE.

A Tale of Man's Perfidy and Woman's Faith.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "RALPH HAMON, THE CHEMIST," "THE WARNING ARROW," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

A NOBLEMAN'S HOME.

A FINE house, a disagreeable owner—like a pretty box, with miserable contents—a palatial abode, with disliked occupant. Here lived the man who was unpopular, because of his uncharitableness, inhospitality, haughtiness and arrogant exterior toward the community in general. A gambler; a lover of fast horses; a man fond of extravagant, flashy display and strong drink; a frequenter of faro tables; a heavy better at roulette; experienced at cards, to trick, cheat, defraud—a winner often, a loser seldom; a handsome man, an educated man, polite to equals, cringing to superiors, steel-hearted, proud, quick-tempered with inferiors; his conversation with either class always in speech that contained a hidden significance; and, finally, holding reputation considerably below par among the eminent social circles of London society.

This was Lord Hallison Blair—a man who had played recklessly with a name handed down unsullied, yet was received graciously at the royal court, was flattered by smiling ladies, was feared by the common people, whom he despised.

"May he be cursed!"

Exclamations like this escaped the lips of many who had occasion to pass a magnificent residence, of unusually attractive architecture, situated in Square St. James, London, where lived Lord Hallison Blair with his bride—where lived the two plotters, the noble and the physician, companions in guilt, but apparently secure in their princely retreat from all inquiry or suspicion.

The Englishman and Brandt were seated in the private apartments of the former on the afternoon of a clear, warm day, near summer's close. A decanter and wine-glasses were on the table before them, and they discussed the liquor in familiar style and lively strain.

"Well," said Blair, holding up a glass of sparkling wine between himself and the sunrays that entered at the window, "what do you begin to think of the general state of things now, eh? Don't you find it different from being hard at work—beating a living out of ailing patients, and writing Latin prescriptions?"

"You will remember, I once said I might be reconciled—"

"Reconciled? Ha! ha! ha!"

"You will not let me finish. I said I might, after a while, become reconciled. I am more than that now. I am pleased in reviewing the cleverness with which we have managed the affair throughout," and the physician smiled grimly.

"Of course you are! Of course you are!" exclaimed Hallison Blair. "You are learning what it is to live stylishly among our best society. You have ridden behind the best horses in my stables, and there's some flesh there that can't be beaten by any other in the country! You've seen the ins and outs of London life pretty thoroughly, after being my companion in every thing. You have seen how much satisfaction is derived from a fat purse; and if you're not more than reconciled, I marvel greatly. By-the-by, don't you think my pretty Pauline is well deserving of the unbounded admiration which everybody bestows upon her?"

"Undoubtedly. I can hardly believe my eyes—"

"And they are not so good as they were once," interrupted Blair. "I am afraid you don't sleep well, doctor, notwithstanding your habitual outward composure. I am very quick to perceive these things. Take my advice, and don't think so much about the money you are handling—where it came from, and so forth. But, excuse me. Proceed. What were you about to say?"

"It surprises me to note how Lady Blair has improved since her sojourn here. I feared she would never regain her former look of blooming health; but she is even more lovely than she was before her father died."

"Died! Died you say? Ha! ha! ha! How singular it is, doctor, you persistently assert that Calvert Herndon died! I believe you will stand by that as long as you live."

"I was not the direct cause of the merchant's death, Lord Hallison," said Brandt, a shadow settling upon his face. "In truth, I am innocent."

"Innocent! There you go again, avowing your innocence for the one hundred and first time. I wonder if you were in a somnambulistic state when you drove from the city of Philadelphia out to Herndon's house, entered the library, placed a poisonous paste on the desk under his nose and caused his unnatural decease? I have often wondered" (he concluded with a touch of sarcasm) "if such might not have been the case."

Doctor Gulick Brandt looked the other in the eye. But only for a second; his gaze was not so strong, steady, unflinching as the hard, metallic glance of the Englishman; and as the physician winced under the searching, snakey eyes that fixed upon him, his head drooped, and he said:

"You know I am innocent of that deed of which you accuse me."

"I know you are innocent? I? I, of all persons, to acquiesce in that? To the contrary, I know you are guilty. Don't I keep



THE CRONE FOILED.

reminding you of the fact, to keep your spirits up? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ay, you torment me, each day that passes, by speaking of Calvert Herndon's murder," coveringly rejoined Brandt. "As to keeping my spirits up—bah! I've none left, save the evil spirit which exists in my heart. I know that, to-day, I am as great a villain as you. But it was not so once."

"Very likely. Few men are born villains."

"Even admitting that I was instrumental in Herndon's death, what use is there in throwing out unending charges of murder? I believe the burial of Pauline's father, a more horrible murder than if we had killed him outright."

"Victor Hassan, for example."

"While Calvert Herndon lay dressed for the grave, there was yet life in him. Neither you nor I stayed the funeral. Therefore, you are deeply involved as myself."

"That is absurd. How was I to know he still lived?"

"I am a physician, and I saw the fact before me. I advised you of it. Then, instead of countenancing an effort to resuscitate him, you threatened me if I disclosed my knowledge to others. I hold you proportionately accountable in this, Hallison Blair."

As Brandt spoke, he appeared to derive considerable self-assurance from the words. He looked up again; assumed a calmer air.

"But the pastille—the pastille?" maliciously suggested Lord Hallison, leaning slightly forward, and concentrating upon the other a glance that would seem to read his very soul.

"I have my opinions regarding that," returned the physician. "Since I came to London I have had time to reflect. I have my opinions."

"And, pray, what are they?" was the indifferent question.

"I am not only satisfied, in my own conscience, of my innocence, but I suspect who placed the deadly pastille in the library."

"Have you? Well, and whom do you suspect?"

"You."

"Pshaw! Let us talk of something else. I have been holding this glass in my hand till my wrist aches. Fill your glass and drink."

Nothing more was said upon the subject then; the physician poured out some wine, and each drank to the continued success of their scheme.

As they set down their empty glasses, the door opened, and a lady entered.

She was attired fashionably for a drive; jewels upon her fingers and person, and raiment of costly fabrics. Her ripe lips are arched; eyes sparkle with fire beneath the long, shading lashes; her mien is graceful, composed, commanding. It is Pauline—Lady Hallison Blair—a leading belle—a peer among the haughtiest and wealthiest—without a rival in loveliness, brilliancy of conversation, and love of her gay life. Lords and ladies alike pay her their homage, forgetting, in her society, that she is the wife of a man disliked and shunned by all honorable men. All within her circle of acquaintance are captivated by her winning smile and sensible converse; yet not blind to notice, at times, a sudden change, when she would become cold toward those around her.

Lady Hallison Blair alone, knew the cause of these abrupt changes in herself, from life and gaiety, to silence and immobility. Amid the festive scenes in which she mingled, there would come a feeling as if her dead father stood near; a shadow like a cloud before the bright sun; a sensation of an existing something, which lingered, unseen, at her side, and stayed her light laugh, pale her cheek, rendered motionless the lips that had been moving fast in pleasant strain.

"Well," said Lord Hallison, "you are going out?"

"For a short drive," she answered, and her voice was even richer in its musical purity of tone than when she reiterated her betrothal vows with Victor Hassan, at the Home Mansion, beyond the Atlantic.

"You go alone, my love?" he pursued.

"Yes. I presume you have no desire to accompany me—you and Doctor Brandt seem so absorbed in each other," and here she flashed a significant look upon the physician, whose back was turned toward her. Blair saw, and smiled.

"I suppose my wife, Lady Hallison Blair, so favorably received everywhere, admired by all for her beauty, a queen of society, can do without the company of her husband this once—eh, love?"

"Oh, certainly. Rest assured I shall not long want for company."

"Au revoir, then. I wish you an enjoyable ride."

She swept from the apartment without speaking further, and as the door closed after her, Lord Hallison turned to his companion with the exclamation:

"By Heaven! I think she grows more beautiful every hour. She was a perfect hour when I married her; now—now—what term is fitting; what word adequate; what name, unless we borrow that of Venus, could do justice to her charms!"

"The physician made no answer."

"You see," continued the nobleman, "I have won a prize—you have gained a mint. Take my advice for a second time, and spend her money freely while you have opportunity. You know Pauline comes of age in November. All her father's wealth becomes hers then. Draw heavily while the chance lasts."

"Do you not apprehend that suspicion may be aroused, if I spend too much money?"

"Suspicion? Nonsense! Nobody in London knows the amount of the annuity left you by Calvert Herndon; and what if it were otherwise? It would make no difference. Had any individual sufficient brass to question you regarding your financial affairs, you could refer them to Lord Blair, who, I pledge you, would answer to their satisfaction. But never fear; we don't do things that way here."

Brandt arose and walked to the window. He simply wished to see Pauline driven off in the open barouche, with restless, gayly-caparisoned horses, held in rein by the flash-fiered groom.

But he had no sooner looked out, his gaze had scarcely been directed to the opposite side of the street, when he uttered a stifled cry, dashed his hands to his forehead, and reeled back to the center of the apartment, falling.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT ALARMED THE PHYSICIAN.

ASTONISHED as was Hallison Blair by this singular condition of his friend, he did not pause to ascertain the cause, but sprung

quickly forward, and sustained Brandt's sinking form.

"In the name of the seven wonders, doctor, what ails you?" cried he, dragging and lifting the physician to a chair.

Brandt groaned, gasped, parted his lips, but could not articulate; and his eyes, bloodshot and staring, were distended widely. This exhibition now thoroughly alarmed Blair, who exclaimed:

"Man alive! what has happened? Speak. Are you paralyzed? Are you dumb?"

For answer, Brandt hurriedly grasped his wrist, bounded from the chair, and ran to the window. Here he found his voice, for he fairly screamed:

"Look! Look there—see!" pointing down the street at a man who was walking rapidly away.

Blair followed with his eyes the direction of the other's finger, and instantly he, too, started, pale, was agitated.

"Can it be?" came from his lips, in husky accents. "Do I dream? Friends! no! I am awake. I am not mistaken. That form!—that step!—it must be!—it is Victor Hassan! Doctor, by the cross of England!—but he addressed empty air."

The physician had dashed wildly from the apartment, and presently Blair saw him emerge from the front entrance, and walk excitedly after the object that had caused their mutual alarm.

The Englishman paced back and forth, his arms folded, his brow darkened, and glittering eyes bent upon the carpet in meditative mood.

"Did I not help strike him down with my own hands?" he mused. "Did I not help dig his grave, place him in that grave, and cover him over with earth? What, then, is this but a delusion? But I saw him, I am sure of that; Brandt saw him—silly fool, and he is nearly become a raving lunatic in consequence. What has he gone after him for?—to be discovered, arrested, implicated both of us, and wind up all our well-ordered scheme in a crushing overthrow? 'Sdeath! I wish I could have detained him.'"

Hallison Blair, though astounded, was not of a temperament to lose all composure. He reasoned as he walked to and fro.

Perhaps as much as half an hour went by when Brandt made his reappearance.

The physician's face was pallid as that of a corpse.

"It's he! It's he, Lord Hallison! What shall we do?"

The picture of abject fear, unbounded terror, which was presented in Doctor Brandt for a moment forced a smile to Blair's lips. But this was supplanted by an expression of supreme contempt.

"Doctor Brandt, you are a fool."

"A fool! You think I am a fool because I am excited? You should tremble, Lord Hallison—tremble as with an ague when you realize that Victor Hassan, the whom we thought dead, is alive, well, here, in London, stopping at the—Hotel?"

"How do you know, positively, that it is Victor Hassan? How do you know that he's stopping at the—Hotel?"

"I know it is he, because I saw him with my own eyes. I know he is stopping at the—Hotel because I followed him there. Oh! Lord! what is to be done!" groaned the terrified man.

"Sit down, and cease this nonsense," commanded Blair. "Are you a timid child? You are playing the dunce to perfection. Sit down."

Brandt obeyed with a moan.

"Now," continued the Englishman, also seating himself, "the first thing to be done is to stop this tomfoolery. Calm yourself at once, so that we may converse rationally. Brandt finally mastered his excitement, and looked at Hallison Blair despondingly.

"You saw Victor Hassan in the flesh, and followed him to the—Hotel?"

"Yes. I even ascertained the number of his room, and found that he had registered under a fictitious name."

"And that name—what was it?"

"A most singular one—Lord Victor Hassan B."

The Englishman leaped from his chair and became greatly excited. "What!" he cried. "What!—repeat that."

The physician did so, and to his surprise, Lord Hallison began pacing to and fro in an unwonted manner.

"Might I ask what is the matter, Lord Hallison?"

"Matter? Matter enough! But, never mind; it is no business of yours, and he continued, musingly: "Strange, strange—what can this coincidence mean? Lord Victor Hassan B. What can it mean?"

He checked himself abruptly, and turning upon Brandt said: "It is unnecessary for us to give ourselves any anxiety in this matter. It is simply lucky that we are so providentially thrown on our guard."

"But what are we going to do?"

"You shall see," replied Hallison Blair. "If I were so easily upset, as you, by trifles, I don't see what we would do."

"Trifles!"

"Never mind. No more of it. You shall learn ere long what course I propose to adopt, and a sinister light gleamed in his dark eyes as he pulled the bell-rope. In answer to the summons a servant stood in the doorway—bowing low.

"Come, sirrah! enter the room and close the door. Why do you stand there? Shall I break every bone and muscle in your miserable body?"

With commendable alacrity, the man closed the door and advanced a few steps, reluctantly, as if he momentarily expected some missile to meet him half-way.

"Mark me. Do you know where is situated the National Gallery?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Close by to it you will notice a restaurant, or wine-saloon. Go there. Look about you, and you will observe a man who wears a broad sombrero and a cloak; has black hair and mustache, and eyes of a corresponding color. Speak to him guardedly; let no one who may be loitering near catch your words. Say to him that Lord Hallison Blair desires to see him without delay. If he chooses to follow you, then conduct him to me. Do you understand my wishes?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then make haste upon your errand. Or shall I make you bear a note to him, telling him to send you in pieces the moment he sees you—good! he's gone," and as the servant disappeared Hallison resumed his walk up and down the room.

"Who is this man you've sent for?" asked Brandt, when they were alone.

"Ha! ha! ha! he's not a man—he's a fiend, a devil, a Satan in the garb of man. For twenty pounds I could bribe him to quarter you, and feed your bleeding body to the Thames. Ha! ha! ha!"

Gulick Brandt felt an icy shiver creep over his frame.

"But don't be alarmed," added the Englishman, "I shall not bribe him to that end. I have other plans."

The afternoon was then well advanced, and twilight shades were deepening into night ere the servant who had been dispatched to Trafalgar Square returned. When he came he brought with him the man to whom he had delivered Lord Hallison's message.

Blair knew this, for the reason that, even in the room where he and Brandt were seated, the hall-door was distinctly heard to open, and shut with a bang, and in a second thereafter, was audible a growl, something like the grumble of distant thunder, and the servants could be heard running away from the vicinity of the front entrance.

"What does that mean? Some one has forcibly entered your house—perhaps a drunken man."

Hallison Blair smiled. "No, doctor, it is all right. You shall see, presently, the man I sent for."

In a few minutes a heavy footfall was heard upon the stairs. The Englishman waited expectantly. Doctor Gulick Brandt was silent in his surprise. Unannounced, as if he were owner of the palatial residence, this strange visitor burst open the door, with hardly an effort to turn the knob, and roared:

"Dios! but it is a more tedious way up here to these rooms than all the walk from Trafalgar Square. My legs fire with having to mount so many steps, and I'm in a rage of impatience. By the bald head of his holiness, the Pope! turn your house down side upward, my lord, that I may reach you the easier when you send for me."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BULL-FIGHTER.

THIS visitor was a Spaniard by birth—as a glance at his swarthy features told; a ruffian by nature—as the flaming, leering eyes betrayed; by profession a bull-fighter; by name Diego Perez; the brave, the rough, the man who eluded and defied the authorities by day, and prowled, shadow-like, at night, committing daring and successful burglaries under cover of the darkness.

He was tall, broad, heavy; muscular as a gladiator; attired partly in the costume of the Spanish arena, and partly in the more civilized style of the English, while over his arm was slung a long sable-hued cloak. A loose blouse was thrown carelessly open at the front, as also was a colored shirt of woolen fabric, exposing a massive, hardened chest, and from an inner pocket hung the stock of a pistol. His great hat was pulled down until it touched the knotted, bushy brows, and underneath the latter two glaring eyes, black as coals, with the glister of a dagger, flashed defiance and insolence upon the beholder. His lips, like those of an angry mastiff, drew back, presenting long, strong, snow-white, regular teeth that grated and gritted till one's blood fairly curdled.

In all, he was just such a character as would, by his towering build, murderous visage, immense strength and heavy, grinding voice, strike terror to the timid heart. Having delivered himself as we have seen, he strode forward and appropriated the easiest chair he could find.

You should be introduced to the public by means of the stage. Diego, he marked Hallison Blair, arising and proceeding to close the door—which office the bull-fighter had neglected.

"Devils seize the theater, and its stage, too!" snarled the ruffian, doffing his hat, and brushing back the matted locks from his forehead. "My stage is the gallows; and the hangman will introduce me to the public some day."

"I sent for you, Diego, to say that I have something for you to do. But I see that you are cross this evening."

"I am cross at all times. I am like a dog—mad at every moment of its life, so that when it bites, though it played with you like a kitten, its teeth is poisonous as if it raced about with hydrophobia."

"There is wine on the table. Drink, and wash some of the fire out of your brain."

"Obliged to you, my lord. Feed fire with fire, and let us see the effect," so saying the Spaniard raised the decanter to his lips, and quizzed a long draught. He looked upon the tiny wine-glasses contemptuously. Satisfying his thirst, he set the decanter down, smacked his lips in a lively way, and returned to his seat.

"This is a friend of mine, Diego, whom you have never seen. This is Diego Perez, doctor of odd jobs, and attendant of cut-throat affairs for his lordship," chimed in Diego, with a nod of his shaggy head; "how d'ye do?"

Brandt merely bowed. He was studying the man before him, and the result of his conclusions was—a villainous, treacherous rascal; an individual addicted to vicious habits; yet, withal, just the fellow to rid you of an enemy either by knife-thrust or bullet, when money was to be the reward.

But what did Hallison Blair want of such a person? Wait. We shall see directly.

"Well, Diego, you are a great villain—do you know it?" said the Englishman.

"Yes; I know it. In Madrid I fought bulls, drew their warm blood with a trusty sword. Here in London—bah! one must depend on his brain alone; must fight men with cunning. It is dull for me, this bleeding of purses, and plundering of rich houses, and hum-drum fiddle-faddle at the gaming saloons, where I am rich to-day and poor to-morrow, by turn. I am sick of it. I want to use steel."

"Perhaps you will have a chance to wet your rusting blade, ere long, Diego."

"Poh! I wish I could believe it. Men avoid me. They shrink from a quarrel with Diego Perez, because he is revengeful as a hyena, strong as an ox, and deadly as a cobra di capella. I would I were weaker, that they might fear me the less, and seek a difficulty with me when I call them liars, fops, cowards. You know the young Viscount Berkeley?"

"Yes, I know him well. I won a thousand pounds from him a night or two since."

"So? Well, I spit upon him last night, before a host of others, as cowardly as he. He grew red in the face, and his rage burst out, but he said nothing to me. I even offered him a knife, and dared him to a fight—agreeing to whip him, myself un-armed. But he fled—ran away like a yelping dog that had been kicked. Ha! ha! ha! I laugh when I think of the sorry show he made. But you said I might have an early chance to color my knife-blade. What do you mean? Say your dir in a bunch, my lord, and not in little dribs, or you will tire my ears to catch a meaning. If there's

bloody work, say so—and where's the money for it?"

"I will be brief as possible. I have work for you to do—work which, if well performed, and you should be discovered, would send you first to jail, and then to the gallows. It is dangerous and bloody. Now, do you understand me?"

"Dios! yes. As for the work—if it pays—"

"It will pay handsomely."

"Good. As for the danger. Madre! I can face it. Discovery I fear not. Tell me what to do, and pay me well, and may Satan seize the Pope if there happens a botch in my task!"

"You see, doctor," said Blair, turning to the physician, "this man will do anything I desire, simply for the asking."

"And a good pay," quickly corrected Diego, with a growl.

"Of course," acquiesced the Englishman, and the bull-fighter pursued:

"Come, come; what is it I am to do? It is full dark outside, and I live a long way from here, where Madge Marks has a supper waiting for me ere this. Whatever you have to say must be spoken at once."

"You know where the—Hotel is?" questioned Lord Hallison.

"Yes," with a snarl.

"There is stopping there," continued Blair, "a young man, who has registered himself 'Lord Victor Hassan B.'"

"I know that," interrupted Diego. "I happened in at the office, not thirty hours ago—primped like a band-box dandy, and waiting to see a rich gentleman, who owed me check-wager—and to pass the time I glanced at the book on the counter. I wondered who, in the fiend's name, Lord Victor Hassan B. was. I have not heard of him. But go on; what of him?"

"He is my enemy."

"You have a great many, my lord."

"True. But this one, deadliest of all, is beyond my reach."

"You mean that I must deal with him?"

"I do. And so does my friend here, Doctor Gulick Brandt."

"Yes," assented the physician, "we want him removed from our path."

"That I see plainly," said Diego; "so it is settled. But the pay is the thing now. How much money, my lord? My pocket is drained. It is a deep one, and it needs filling."

"I'll give you twenty pounds."

"Twenty pounds!" and the two words were ground between the Spaniard's teeth like corn in a mill; while his tone was sneering, contemptuous, sarcastic. "You will pay me twenty pounds to rid the world and you of an object that hurts nobody? How generous! How liberal! Bah! a dozen times, bah! I would not raise my hand to strike a squalling cat for such a sum. Twenty pounds! Think of it! Dios! have you a mind to beggar yourself? Scrutinize—this will not do. Twice, nor thrice that amount will not do. Make it a hundred pounds, and our bargain is done."

"I was only feeling you, Diego," smiled the Englishman; "we are willing to pay you a hundred pounds, if you will swear by the Virgin to rid us of this enemy. Is it not so, doctor?"

Brandt assented, and the bull-fighter said: "I swear by Satan!—not by the Virgin, for the oath would not bind me. When we pray, we pray to the Virgin; when we curse or swear or make oath, it is by his majesty, the devil."

"Either or both, Diego, it makes no difference to me. Will you do your task for the hundred pounds?"

"Yes," with a grunt.

"Are you sure you know your man?"

"Yes," with another grunt.

"Then kill him, Diego—kill him! Don't let him escape you. I will pay you half your money now, and the balance when your work is done."

Lord Hallison Blair arose, and going to a large secretary, opened a drawer which contained the book of his bank account. Tearing out a blank, he wrote a check for fifty pounds, and handed it to Diego Perez.

"There it is," he said. "You can draw it at leisure. When you are ready to report to me the fact that this 'Lord Victor Hassan B.' is no more, another like it awaits you. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, I am satisfied, and obliged to you, my lord," and the bull-fighter carefully folded, and placed in a pocket, the check he had received.

"Now, Diego Perez, be sure you do not fail," spoke Gulick Brandt, at this point.

"Fail!" was the quick, savage rejoinder, and the accent, the tone, the force of utterance, was so unexpected that the physician started. "Fail, did you say? Wherefore should I fail? Do you see me? Can you read me? Do I look like a man who would fail? He who suggests failure to Diego Perez makes himself my enemy, and I'd crush him beneath my foot as I would a poisonous spider! Fail, indeed! This speech was followed by a hiss from the lips, a grinding of the teeth, a knitting of the brows, and Blair glanced at the physician in a way that conveyed the words: "Be careful. If you make him your enemy, it were better for you had you never been born."

"When will you go about this thing?" asked the lord.

"The sooner the better, I imagine. Does that suit you?"

"Perfectly."

"Then I will be off," saying which, he got up and walked toward the door.

Lord Hallison was about to follow the bull-fighter, when the latter paused abruptly, and said:

"No need to trouble yourself. I can find the way out."

He quitted the room; they heard his heavy step in the entry; then he descended the stairs, and an indistinct room came to their ears as the servants were heard scattering before him as they had when he came in. The front door banged, and silence reigned.

"He is gone," said Blair.

"And I am glad of it," added the physician. "I half fear him, even though he is pledged to do us a service. I should tremble for my life if I met him in the dark."

"You would have cause to, if he knew you carried money about your person. You did wrong in suggesting a failure to him. I saw by the glitter of his eyes that he was slightly angered. Perhaps it will amount to nothing, though. I know how to deal with him. I picked him up in a gambling saloon, a half-starved wretch—fed and clothed him. He has been a handy tool ever since. When I am in a difficulty from which I can not extricate myself, I send for Diego Perez, and he adjusts it to my benefit. He is feared by all with whom he mingles. You have seen him in a tame state. When you behold

him enraged, boiling with passion, then you hear the roar of a lion, the yelp of a wolf, the cry of a panther; see the baying of a dog, though every man held a cocked pistol, and feared to discharge a shot at him. He is a bloodhound, fierce and terrible, when money is the incentive; and Victor Hassan escaped our first blow at his life, he will not escape the second. He is doomed from this hour! But how strange it seems to me that he was not killed!" and Hallison Blair fell to musing inwardly.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 3X.)

The White Witch!

OR,
THE LEAGUE OF THREE.

A STRANGE STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "HEART OF FIRE," "WOLF DEMON," "SCARLET HAND," "ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE LEAGUE.

MONTGOMERY did not have long to wait, for in a few moments after O'Connell's departure, he was again tapped on the shoulder. He turned and beheld the Englishman, Pipgan.

"I've kept you waiting for a little while, but couldn't help it," Pipgan said, a self-satisfied look on his shrewd face.

"But where the deuce did you come from?" asked Montgomery.

"From the hotel. I've taken up my quarters here." Pipgan had again assumed the dress and manners of the "swell."

"You have?"

"Yes, of course; so as to keep my eyes upon my birds."

"Well, what success?" Montgomery asked, eagerly; "have you discovered any thing?"

"More than that; I've discovered every thing."

"You have?"

"Yes, and to-night I think we can end the affair."

"Tell me what you have discovered?"

"Not now; to-night you shall know every thing. Let me work the case up in my own way," said the Englishman. "I am sure that you will be satisfied with what I have done."

"To-night then I shall know all?"

"Yes; and now, Mr. Montgomery, I want you to assist me a little."

"Certainly," Montgomery replied; "what is it?"

"I'm obliged to go down to my old stopping-place, 'The Grapes.' I expect a cable dispatch. I should like to have you remain here and notice whether this O'Connell returns or not, before I do."

"All right; I will."

"I shan't be gone long. Make your mind easy; to-night will straighten out this tangled skein," and after giving this assurance Pipgan departed.

Montgomery remained on the watch.

We will now follow O'Connell down the street.

The face of the chief of the League of Three was flushed with triumph as he walked rapidly on.

The

so easily subdued. When the worst fit of faintness was on her she was rising a swell, from the top of which she hoped to make some favorable discovery. She knew if she did not that she must sink to rise no more. Imagine, then, her pleasurable sensations when she saw the ruddy glow of camp-fires become suddenly visible on the opposite bank of a small river in the distance.

The poor girl, who had been so long without food, at once recollected the injunctions of her future husband.

The opposite bank of this nameless river was forested—dense forests on every side—while the site chosen by the Indians for their camp was a small natural clearing, encompassed on three sides by trees, on the fourth by the stream. Matata could see rude temporary huts and a large fire, which served the purpose of light as well as to cook their evening meal. It was blazing high and bright, some lads having cast on an armful of dried brush.

Some lads—yes; and as Matata looked keenly around, she saw that the whole of the denizens of the camp, if we except a few white-haired warriors, consisted of children, striplings, old women and young girls. The Prairie Rose's heart bounded within her. Had Providence, the good Manitou, she said, while making her lose the trail she was so bent on following, brought her to that which she had been seeking for many months?

Pressing her hand upon her heart, she looked around, examining every feature of a scene that might have satisfied the imagination of even the great painter of the rugged life of the bandit or the outlaw. The men were seated on a log near the fire, conversing in whispers; the lads, in deference to their superiors, stood a little aloof, enjoying the prospect of a hearty meal; the children played in merry groups, but it was among the girls and young women that Matata cast her eager glances.

They were a little to the left of the fire, and yet within its influence, which, while the blaze lasted, sufficed to light up the arches of the forest and render a certain area like day, for the night had come slowly on.

Matata slowly scrutinized their features, and at last, with a bounding heart, her eyes fell upon the form of a charming girl of fifteen, who, somewhat grave and sad, stood a little apart from the rest of the group, alone and unquestioned.

The Prairie Rose at once made up her mind, every other consideration for a moment vanishing before her sisterly affection for that boy and girl, who no longer had parents to protect and love them. Crossing the stream and tottering up the bank, assuming even greater weakness than she felt, Matata boldly entered within the circle of light, stood a moment in view of the whole camp, and then moved with slow and feeble steps toward the group of elders.

Not a sign of greater emotion than a nervous twitching of the lips, denoted that the warriors were surprised, but a signal from the oldest chief, the father of Theoderigo, six of the stoutest youths glided beneath the covert, to assure themselves that this startling appearance of a woman did not presage some ambush or treacherous attack.

"Whence come, and what seek you, my daughter?" asked the white-headed old chief, after sufficient delay to make the question courteous and dignified.

"I am an-hungry and a-thirst—for many moons have I traveled on the great prairie alone—and now my strength fails me, and I fall by the way."

"You shall sit at our feast presently," continued the chief. "Who and what are you?"

"I am Matata, daughter of the Biting Panther, the Huron," said the girl, standing as erect as her strength would allow. "The-oderigo, the Black Hawk of the Shawnees, has taken the scalp of my father and my mother and scattered to the four winds of heaven the ashes of my wigwam; he has taken into captivity to adopt in his tribe my brother and my sister. A woman knows but her heart. I have followed the hills over; their very footsteps were nailed upon my heart; and now, after the great storm, the good Manitou has sent me here because I had no food; and I have found my sister."

"Matata!" cried a childish voice; and despite all red-skin customs, the girls were clasped in each other's arms.

All looked on in admiration. Even the old man smiled grimly.

"A brother, I hope," continued Prairie Rose, glancing uneasily at the group of boys, where a lad of sixteen stood sullen and moody.

"No," cried the boy, with a look of profound contempt, "the Hurons are squaws, they can not defend themselves; the paint on the face of Little Bear is Huron, but his heart is blood-red—he is a Shawnee, the adopted son of the Bald Eagle."

A proud look from the aged warrior, a murmur of applause from the Shawnees followed, and Matata, overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, was led away by her sister. In a few minutes the young scouts returned to say that all was still in the forest and on the plain, and that Matata was truly alone.

Then the evening meal was partaken of, Matata and her sister receiving a most liberal allowance. With this the young Huron girl retired under the shadow of a tree apart, taking her sister with her, who moved passively along.

"I can not eat," sighed the Prairie Rose. "Ononda has broken my heart—the last of his race, a traitor."

Bright Fawn, the girl's name, laughed one of those low, almost inaudible Indian laughs which are taught by habits of caution and the daily experience of danger, a laugh that made Matata look up.

"Ononda sly fox—very little bear," she whispered in the other's ear; "all Huron—heart is all to revenge his father's death."

A bright radiance passed over the face of Matata, and an hour later she slept in peace, wrapped in her sister's arms, beneath the tents of their hereditary foes—the Shawnees.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 55.)

A Strange Phenomenon.—One of the most curious things connected with the eruptions of Cotopaxi and other South American volcanoes is the fact that countless quantities of fish, mingled with mud and clay, are sometimes vomited out of the craters or from fissures in the mountain-sides. The fish, well named *Arges Cyclopus*, no doubt lives in subterranean lakes that lie somewhere in the line of fire; and this fish is known to exist in certain elevated lakes on the mountains, but probably breed more abundantly in internal reservoirs. Cases have occurred where their eruption and consequent decay have produced pestilence.

TO THE FOX.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Poor Fox, in many ways and shapes
They treat thee badly, and I sigh
To read thou couldst not get the grapes
Because they hang them up so high.

In reading-books, on every page,
Thou'rt chased by Tom, and Bob, and Ben
And children get into a rage
Because thou lovest a good fat hen.

In faith, I can not blame thee much;
I know of bolder men than thee
That have a hollow tooth for such,
And one of them might look like me.

I pick up an arithmetic
To find how much is six and five;
Even there thy evil fate doth stick
To thee, as sure as I'm alive!

Thou art in every other verse
Chased by the inevitable hound,
Which e'er is gaining on your course
By taking more feet at a bound.

The question never is, "How soon
Will he find safety 'mong the rocks,"
But—"How far has the hound to run
Before he catches Mr. Fox?"

So night and day thou art pursued,
Yet never fast enough canst fly;
So it is easily understood
Why thou'rt obliged to be so sly.

I stand upon the golden rule:
And chickens, I'll deny thee not—
My neighbor has a barn-yard full
Thou'rt welcome, fox, to all he's got!

The Dwarf's Warning.

A STORY OF ANCIENT MEXICO.

BY CAPT. CHAS. HOWARD.

TOWARD the close of the last century, Emanuel Montivideo became noted as the most expert watchmaker and lapidary in the city of Mexico. He was a young man, of faultless mold and prepossessing appearance. He was industrious, seldom leaving his little shop during the day. Indeed, he had no excuse for idleness, for more orders continually covered his desk than he and Pedro, his dwarfish assistant, could well execute.

Pedro was ever merry as the meadow lark—a song, not at all unmelodious in its accents, bubbled to his lips while he arranged the tiny wheels and delicate hair-springs, or cut the precious stones for beautiful fingers. No mountain back was Pedro's. He was a dwarf, minus deformities, and ten years his master's senior. His countenance betokened intelligence, and

was not repulsive. A pair of fiery eyes burned beneath raven lashes, and a monster mustache concealed his mouth.

The dwarf's master was merry and sad by turns. Sometimes he would pause abruptly in the midst of a canzonet, and lapse into gloomy melancholy, from which Pedro's buffoonery could not draw a smile.

Pedro resolved to inquire into the cause of Emanuel's melancholy, and from the making of that resolve, became his employer's shadow. But his labor was without reward for a fortnight.

One evening Emanuel closed the little shop earlier than usual, and hurried toward the southern suburbs of the capital. Pedro was at his heels. The dwarf skulked in the shade of the buildings, while the lapidary walked erect in the twilight. At last, after a long walk, Emanuel entered a dilapidated stone building of antique architecture, which the dwarf knew to be tenanted.

As noiselessly as the jungle tiger creeps upon the unsuspecting Hindoo, Pedro approached the old structure and crouched in the gloom beneath a sashless window.

Stillness reigned in the hut for many minutes, during which time the dwarf moved neither limb nor muscle.

He believed that the mystery of his master's dejection was about to be solved. Suddenly approaching footsteps fell upon his ears, and presently a dark form glided into the hut.

Pedro heard the meeting of hands, followed by his master's voice:

"Joachim, I thought thou were going to play me false. Why didst thou not sooner come?"

"The guards were doubled to-night, Emanuel," was the reply, in an unfamiliar tone. "The people fear the swoop of the merciless mountain eagle. It was tough work eluding the sentries."

"But, thou didst elude them, eh, Joachim?" cried the lapidary. "Good, good! But I will not detain thee. I will to business at once. Can not thou guess what I would with thee?"

"I can not, good Montivideo."

"One year ago come to-morrow's twilight," continued the watchmaker. "I asked Innette, the lancer colonel's only daughter, to share the humble lapidary's fortunes."

"Which she refused to do?" interrupted the auditor.

"Yes, Joachim."

"With haughty mien?"

"No; with kind, sad words."

"And returned the presents which thou hadst given her?"

"Ay."

"Why did she reject thee?"

"Why does any woman reject an honest gentleman?"

"Because she loves another."

"Truly answered," said Emanuel, biting his nether lip till the red gore trickled down on his perturbed beard. "Curse him!" with bitterness.

"Whom, good Emanuel?"

"Silviero Montijo—her lover."

"She loves the young ranchero, then?"

"Ay."

"I hate him!" growled Joachim.

"Good!" cried the lapidary. "He must die!"

"For months he has eluded me," said the other. "I would give one-tenth of my wealth for an opportunity to cleave that thing he would call a heart. Where is he, Emanuel?"

"In the city."

"And when rides he thence?"

"To-morrow night."

"Unattended?"

"No; his bride and several soldiers will ride at his side."

"His bride, sayst thou?"

"Yes; the woman I love."

"Shall I kill her, too?" cried Joachim. "I hate the very ground his feet kisses."

"By the cross, no!" cried the lapidary. "Pierce his body with thy sword, and give it to the wolves; but, spare her. Listen! At chimes to-morrow night she becomes his bride. Immediately after the ceremony they set out for Salpedo, where dwell his aged parents. Three soldiers will accompany them. He fears, I have been secretly informed, no attack. Thou couldst attack them in the Black Pass."

"I will do it," cried the other. "By the cross, she shall be a widow an hour after the bridal."

"Good!" cried the lapidary, grasping Joachim's hands. "What wilt thou charge me for the job? Ask thine own price, Joachim."

"Not a real, not a real! I ought to pay thee, Emanuel, for giving me a chance to kill the dog. But, thou hast said nothing of Innette, save that I should spare her life. Suppose I convey her to my mountain palace, whither thou canst come and woo anew. By Jove! good Montivideo, some time we'll have a midnight bridal."

The lapidary laughed at the suggestion, and bade the bandit transform his mountain retreat into a prison—a transformation it quite often underwent.

"Five good fellows will be enough," said

Joachim, as he emerged from the old building, muffled in his great cloak.

The twin continued to converse as they walked away, and when they had disappeared the listener rose to his feet.

"A pretty plot, is it not?" he said, displaying his wonderful aptitude at rhyming. "Where does imperiled Innette dwell? Where?—I'd save her—angels, tell. And Joachim, the bandit red—a price is set upon his head."

And, continuing the above strain, the dwarfish rhymist bounded from beneath the window upon the trail of the conspirators.

During the remainder of the night sleep came not to the eyes of Pedro the dwarf. Tossing restlessly upon his couch of straw, he maturated and abandoned plans for the rescue of the lovers from the fate which awaited them. And morning found him as far from a feasible plan as ever. He was not acquainted with the persons of the doomed lovers, was ignorant of their dwelling-places, and reluctantly gave up all hope of rendering them assistance. True, he might tell the Government that Joachim, the mountain thief, would be at the Black Pass that night; but the Government would promptly arrest him, charging him with the crime of attempting to draw its troops into an ambush.

In no merry mood the dwarf entered the little shop that morning.

Emanuel was seated at his desk, busishing some tiny wheels, while he whistled a lively Spanish air.

Pedro darted a scowl, black as starless midnight, upon him, and placed himself before his own bench.

"What can be the matter with the dwarf?" mused the lapidary, bestowing a glance upon Pedro. "I will question him. Pedro, boy, why art thou so quiet this morn?"

The dwarf muttered some incoherent words without looking up from his work, and Emanuel, satisfied that something was wrong, returned to the wheels.

"Can it be that he suspects?" he muttered, fearfully. "No; I left him in the shop yesterday eve. He did not follow."

Silence reigned in the lapidary's shop for several minutes, when the door opened with a slight noise, and a beautiful girl glided across the threshold.

She bestowed a smile upon Emanuel, and approached his desk.

"Are the jewels finished, good Emanuel?" she inquired, in a sweet voice.

"Yes, Innette," and the watchmaker thrust his hand into the desk and drew forth a beautiful necklace.

At the mention of the visitor's name, Pedro dropped his work, and turned from the bench.

Innette! Could she be the Innette his master would wed? He thought affirmatively.

"So at chimes you wed?" said Emanuel, fixing his eyes upon the girl.

"Yes," she answered, a crimson glow suffusing her cheeks. "Wilt thou not honor us with thy presence?"

"I will try, pretty Innette. I love thee still, and I can say: Jesu bless thee."

The maiden smiled, and turned to depart. Pedro had watched her like the serpent, and as her skirt brushed the block upon which he sat, his long arms encircled her neck and drew her, struggling, to him.

Emanuel enjoyed the scene.

"One kiss I crave, fair maid—no more; he will not miss it, I am sure," and the dwarf's lips touched the crimson cheek.

A moment later his mustache covered Innette's ear, in which he hurriedly whispered:

"Senora, watch as thou dost ride to the bridal couch at thy lover's side."

Then he released her, and the next minute the door closed behind her flying form.

The dwarf turned to his work again, while a smile of satisfaction stole over his features.

Emanuel suspected nothing.

The last silvery sound of the chimes had scarcely ceased to reverberate in the belfry of the old cathedral, when Montijo and his bride, accompanied by thirty trusty rancheros, rode from the city of the Montezumas.

Without the limits of the city a halt was made, and the operation of muzzling twenty-five horses' feet performed. Then the band resumed its march.

When near the Black Pass, Innette, attended by a soldier, fell behind the troop, which rode into the gloomy thoroughfare.

Presently the clash of swords and the report of carbines told that the escort had been attacked. The battle was as decisive as brief. Deluded by the muffled tread of the steeds, Joachim had boldly attacked the troops to be overpowered and captured.

His party were either killed or wounded. Gathering up the spoils of their victory, a number of the soldiers returned to the city with their prisoner, while the others proceeded to Salpedo.

I have but little to add. Joachim was promptly executed; the baffled lapidary fled the city, and Pedro, the rhymester,

took possession of the shop, and for many years ate at the board of the happy couple whose lives he had saved.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

A Duel in a Saw-pit.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"You all remember that buzzine 'bout the duel between Ned Sanford and the youngster name 'Campbell, when we wur up on the Staked Plains, don't 'ee," said the old rancher, in reply to a chance question as to where Ned Sanford then was.

There were several of us present when the story to which the speaker alluded was told, and having satisfied him that we *did* remember the circumstance, he continued:

"Es I told you then, Ned Sanford warn't never the same man arter the Comanch' rubbed out the young feller, an' he got drinkin' an' reckless like, an' didn't seem to keer nothin' about his traps nor nothin' else, except seven-ey' er monte."

"Last summer, Ned was down at El Paso, on one ur his 'tarin' busts, an' I tell you he made the greasers keep dark. Why, for two whole days an' nights, I don't bleeve thar wur half a dozen uv the yaller-bellies out on the streets, unless they wur a-doggin' an' peekin' around, tryin' to keep outen Ned's way."

"The wurst uv it wur, thar was two or three more uv the boys thar, an' every one uv 'em seemed ex of they war tryin' to see which one could drink the most argardently an' raise the biggest fuss."

"Well, right in the middle uv it all, who shed come in town but about a dozen Mexikin pig-stickers, w' the' long poles, as they calls lances, an' what with the' fine hosses, an' gold an' the like, all over the' rignin', they cut a powerful swell. They jess took the town, you see, on'y it didn't stay took long."

"It was es plain es Pike's Peak on a cl'ar day thet these two parties couldn't agree very long in thet leeble place. Thar warn't room for both ur 'em, an' it wur soon see'd thet one or t'other ur 'em war bound to 'vacuate. What I means by that, ar, they would hev to cut dirt an' travel."

"Well, the boyes an' the Mexikins kept growlin' an' scowlin' at one 'nuther fur two or three days, an' ev'ry time they met enywar, thar wur sartin to be ugly words passed."

"One night, while Ned an' two more uv the fellers wur a-settin' in the place whar they sold argentine, in ken the whole lot uv yaller-bellies, cussin' an' swearin' thet they could jess clean out all the 'mericans in the airth. Thet wur a lie, an' Ned ups an' tells the' capt'in so."

"Thet kind uv talk wur fightin' talk, an' at it they went, the hull tribe pillin' on Ned an' the other two."

"Now, it allers goes ag'in the grain fur me to say eny thing clever 'bout a greaser; but, I will say thet the Mexikin capt'in did act squar."

"He see how oneven the fought wur, an' he called the others off, an' then walkin' up to Ned, he sez:

"We'll jess fight this hyar little scrimmage out, all by ourselves."

"Nuff sed," sez Ned.

"The greaser told Ned to fix when, an' whar, an' how, an' durn my cats, ef Ned didn't jess fix it, an' a nice fix it wur. How do 'ee think Ned sed they wur to fight? You see, he sorter guessed es how the greaser wur handy w' his weepins—durn 'em, they allers ar fur sich work!—an' es his own hand wur onstendy from the drink, he jess draw'd the yaller-belly up to close quarters."

"They wur to fight in a saw-pit, stripped to the' middle, an' the weepins wur bowies es big an' es long es each one wanted."

"The other fellers tried hard to persuade Ned outen sich foolishness," but he war cussed an' ugly as a sore-headed 'bar, an' he wouldn't hear a word."

"Then they thought thet the greaser would cave, but nary a cave. Thet Mexikin wur game to the backbone, an' further too, an' he jess fairly jumped at Ned's proposition."

"Well, next mornin' all the boyes on one side, an' the hull Mexikin population on t'other, went down to the saw-pits to see the fight."

"They wur both soon red-dy, an' Ned, he jumped in fust, an' party soon the greaser, he le'p in too. The weepins wur handed in, the planks pulled over the top uv the hole, so es to shet out daylight, an' then the word to commence wur give by a big feller, who wur 'p'inted fur the bizness."

"You could 'd heard a chicken-feather drap, so afireed silent wur thet court. All you could hear wur a kind uv scuffin' sound way down in the yearth like, an' now an' then, a holler sort uv a blow, 's ef somebody wur poundin' on anuther feller's bread-basket."

"It wur aciterly awful, boyes, fur thar warn't one uv us thar but knowed thar wur bloody work goin' on down thar under them planks."

"It seemed more'n a hour afore we heard a knockin' on the under side. It war the sign thet the fight wur over, an' the winnin' man wanted to get out."

"I fairly weakened as they lifted them boards up, but when I see Ned's head a-pokin' out, I jess fetched a reg'lar war-whoop. He was monstrous white about the gills, an' that weak, we hed to haul him up, but he wur alive, an' thet were a heap. We fetched him to our shanty an' laid him down, an' thar he's a-lyin' yit, fur he's on'y jess able to hobble about on two sticks. He will git well, but he won't ever trap ag'in."

"What became of the Mexican?" asked some one.

"Oh, we left them a-fishin' up the piece. They hed got up the head and one leg when we left, an' I reckon they found the balance."

Beat Time's Notes.

WRITERS on health assert that intemperance shortens a man's life ten years; tobacco the same; care ditto; coffee another ten; over-eating five; these added together make forty-five; now, a man aged fifty addicted to all these habits would find himself dying at the age of five years. I can't make it out any other way.

WHEN Smith's father died he left him nothing but his blessing. At an early age he put that out at interest, so he has long been without a principle.

New versions of Scripture are often per-versions.

FARMERS will find that it takes a good many prunes to prune a whole orchard.

If you should accidentally inhale a grindstone, frame and all, send after a derrick and recover it.

If you should happen to swallow a mouse, swallow a cat immediately.

If you get a coal-scuttle in your wind-pipe and find that it interferes with your breathing, don't neglect it, but fish for it with a well-hook.

I RECEIVED the congratulations of my many friends on my last birthday, and each one wished me many returns of the day, but whether they wished more than one a year I am unable to determine.

I TOOK her little hand in mine and gave it many a kiss; I said her beauty was divine—called Heaven to witness this. I praised the glory of her brow, and cheeks, that shamed the rose, and paid my tribute to her chin, my homage to her nose. I sighed into her listening ear—her left it was I think—that I was almost in despair; yes, standing on the brink. I spoke of what my life would be if I was left to pine; I talked of love and arsenic, and asked her to be mine. She gently said, "I think you are perfection o'er and o'er; I think you are a perfect fool," and—I went out the door.

I INTENDED to do this thing up into poetry, but the compositor said it was so weak it couldn't stand up to be measured.

IN damp weather, just before going out, the best thing you can take would probably be an umbrella. Dissolve it in a glass of water and put it down at a draught, with something afterward to take the taste out of your mouth.

THE last peck of doughnuts sent me were shaken off the tree a little too late, probably. They were, I think, over-ripe. I took a flat-iron and a hammer, and, with the family ranged about the fire, I began to crack them. The shells were pretty thick, but the kernels were found to be very soft—very—too soft, in fact. We took them to be worms, anyway, and sent the whole lot to the cheese factory.

BEAT TIME.